

Thus Saith The Lord

By

DAVID LIPE

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INTRODUCTION

Regardless of what we say in the name of religion, can we say that it is a "Thus Saith the Lord"? In other words, are we speaking by the authority of Christ or according to the teaching of the Bible? If not, it is a mere opinion or man-made teaching and therefore it can be misleading and destructive. What is important is what the Lord has said. Only when we hear him and obey his teaching can we be saved. As preachers and teachers of God's word, even as ordinary Christians, we are duty-bound to speak only as the oracles of God.

Bro. David Lipe of Kosciusko, Miss., U.S.A., is the author of this book. He is not only a preacher of God's word but is also an educator. Presently he is an instructor at Magnolia Bible College in Kosciusko. During this past year he has also preached for the Church of Christ in Winona, Miss. where my family and I worship when we are at home.

Some of these articles have been used in The Winona Times newspaper in Winona. All of them originally appeared in a weekly bulletin edited by Bro. Lipe.

Becoming acquainted with Bro. Lipe some two years ago, and finding him to be a faithful gospel preacher, I suggested that we could use his materials here in India in our literature work. He was most happy to share his writings with us, and counting Bro. Lipe as my personal friend, I am delighted to be able to pass these thought-provoking articles on to you in the form of this book. I would pray that you will find them informative and helpful in your study of God's word.

J.C. Choate
Church of Christ
New Delhi
March 5, 1984

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THUS SAITH THE LORD

"Thus Saith The Lord" is the title for our book. I know of no other book that has this name; thus it is in order that I comment as to why I chose it. This expression is found throughout the Scriptures. There are various passages that relate the same point emphasized in "thus saith the Lord." Hebrews 1 : 1, 2 says, "God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in times past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son..." And in I Peter 4 : 11 we find, "If any man speak, let him speak as the oracles of God;..." The great restoration preachers used as their guiding principles, these familiar statements : "We speak where the Bible speak; we are silent where the Bible is silent." "Unity in matters of faith; liberty in matters of judgment; brotherly love in all things." These statements are still applicable today. The restoration of New Testament Christianity is not something which occurs one time and then to be considered only a fact of history. In every generation we must make a conscious effort to "speak as the oracles of God." Our preaching must be based on what God has said. The apostle Paul said to the young preacher Timothy to "preach the word". (II Tim. 4:2). The reason Timothy was to preach the word is stated in verse three of the same chapter. "For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears." Note that Timothy was to *preach the word*. To preach the word is to preach with a "thus saith the Lord." Some people have a problem in determining what is right and what is wrong; however, if we follow the admonition of the above scriptures there will be no problem because we will be staying within the bounds of what the Scripture says. What is right is what the Bible says and what is wrong is what the Bible does not say. Let us urge each other to preach and teach with a "thus saith the Lord."

TRADITIONALISM

One of the greatest hindrances to the New Testament Church is traditionalism. The different parties, sects, and divisions of men would be greatly reduced if it were not for the traditions of men. The Greek word for "tradition" is *paradosis* which means, "precept, instruction, ordinance—delivered orally or in writing." Cruden says in his *Complete Concordance*, "Usually this word means laws and regulations handed down orally from one generation to another, and forming the Oral Law of the Jews, which Jesus frequently denounced when it was against the real law of God." While the apostle Paul admonishes to "...stand fast, and hold the traditions which ye have been taught, whether by word, or our epistle" (II Thess. 2:15), this is no reason to place the traditions of men equal with the Scriptures. For to do this would entail making the same mistake the Pharisees' of Jesus day made. Jesus was asked by the Pharisees, "Why do thy disciples transgress the tradition of the elders? for they wash not their hands when they eat bread." (Matt. 15:3). In reply Jesus asked, "Why do ye also transgress the commandment of God by your tradition?" (Matt. 15:3). The Pharisees were denounced because they were making their traditions laws.

Today, when ardent religionists are confronted with a conflict between the Bible and their dogmas, they bypass the Word of God. To do this is to elevate the traditions of men above the very Scriptures. Jesus said, "But in vain they do worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men" (Matt. 15:9), and Paul notes, "Betware lest any man spoil you, through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ". (Col. 2:8).

I ask you the question, "Why are you what you are?", as far as religious conviction is concerned. Are you a member of a denomination just because your parents were? Do you profess what you do just because some relatives or friends profess the same thing. Upon what do you base your convictions? On the traditions of men or on the Word of God?

STANDARD OF AUTHORITY—I

This title contains two words of ultimate importance. First, note the word "standard." This word means, "that which is set up and established by authority as a rule for the measure of quantity, weight, extent, value or quality." Second, consider the word, "authority." Authority means, "power to require and receive submission: the right to expect obedience; superiority derived from a status that carries with it the right to command and give final decisions."

All of us recognize the need for a standard of authority in every activity of life. Before any matter can be settled, men must be able to appeal to an authority which all parties involved will accept. If we ask a department store for a yard of material, we expect a standard of measurement to be used. A standard of authority must be utilized in order to properly regulate a football game. Imagine the chaos which would reign if there were no standard of authority.

Surely, we can see the need for standards in our physical life; however, when it comes to the spiritual aspect, many do not see this need. If men are to be united in their religious beliefs and practices, there must be a common standard of authority to which all men submit. In the religious world there are many false standards of authority. Some use their *feelings* as a standard. When asked the question, "Why do you think you are saved?", they reply by saying, "Because I feel it in my heart." Suppose men were guided by their feelings in matters of a secular nature. The public would not stand for a merchant who cut material "by his feelings." While the feelings are important, they cannot be regarded as the true standard of authority. Our feelings are influenced by what we believe whether true or false. Note carefully Pro. 16:25 and Matthew 7:21-23. Neither is the *conscience* the true standard of authority. One should never violate his conscience. (Rom. 14:23). But, the conscience does not tell us what truth is. Truth is learned from the Bible. Paul lived "in all good conscience" (Acts 25:1) but violently persecuted the church. What do you use as your standard of authority in religion? Next, we want to observe some further false standards.

STANDARD OF AUTHORITY—II

Last time it was observed that everyone recognizes a need for a standard of authority in every activity of life. In our physical activities, this standard is easily recognized, however, many do not see the same need in spiritual matters. Nevertheless, the need for a standard of authority in spiritual matters still remains.

We have already looked at two false standards of authority; namely the feelings and the conscience. Many feel that if they follow their *forefather's religion* they are submitting to the true standard of authority. This cannot be the case, for our forefathers themselves differed religiously. Paul followed the religion of his forefathers, but when he saw that he was wrong, he made a change.

John Dewey, an atheist, and great educator, says the way to establish a standard is to observe how the *majority* of the best people live. Dewey is inconsistent in his contention, however, in that one would not be able to determine who the best people are without a standard. The majority of the people today do not claim to follow Christ. The Bible makes it clear that the majority are evil. "Thou shalt not follow a multitude to do evil..." (Ex. 23:2). Jesus said, "Enter ye in at the strait gates : for wide is the gate, and broad is the way, that leadeth to destruction, and many there be which go in thereat." (Matt. 7:13).

Many contend that if they follow the teachings of a *human creed* they are submitting to the true standard of authority. But, just because a doctrine or belief is stated in a creed, that does not make the doctrine or belief authoritative. Any message which differs from the gospel of Christ is not in accordance with the true standard. (Gal. 1:6-9).

The true standard of authority in religion is the Word of God. Only it can be appealed to as the final authority. II Timothy 3:16, 17 says, "All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction; for instruction in righteousness; that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works."

STRANGE THINGS ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST—I

There are some strange things said about the Church of Christ. There were strange things said about the church in the first century. In Thessalonica, it was said that its leaders "turned the world upside down." (Acts 18:13). In Rome, the church was regarded as the "sect . . . everywhere . . . spoken against." (Acts 28:22).

It is said by some today that the Church of Christ does not believe in the Old Testament. It amazes them when we use a text from the Old Testament. The truth concerning it however is that it is just as inspired as the New Testament. Many do not understand our emphasis on the New Testament. When Jesus died on the cross the law of Moses was taken away and a new covenant was established. "He taketh away the first that he may establish the second." (Heb. 10:9; cf. Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:14). After the Old Testament served its purpose the New Testament came into effect. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a school master." (Col. 3:24, 25). Hebrews 8:7 says, "For if that first covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." If we were to make a will and later on changed that will and made a new one, the old one would no longer be effective. The same is true concerning the old covenant. When a new covenant was made the old covenant ceased to be effective.

Those who accuse us of denying the Old Testament, say, "We take it, both Old and New." If by "take it" they mean, "practice it", they do not take animal sacrifices, distinction of meats, and penalty for breaking the sabbath, etc. What they really mean is they take what they want: sabbath, instrumental music, etc. Galatians 5:3 indicates that if you go back to one thing, you must go back to all. "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is a debtor to do the whole law."

We believe in the Old Testament just as much as the New Testament. But, we no longer submit ourselves to its laws for the New Testament is now in effect.

STRANGE THINGS ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST—II

Another strange thing which is said about the Church of Christ is that it denies salvation by grace. Salvation by the grace of God is plainly taught by the Scriptures and therefore advocated by the church. "Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus." (Rom. 3:24). "For the grace of God that bringeth salvation hath appeared to all men." (Tit. 2:11). Salvation from past sins is by grace. "For by grace are ye saved through faith . . ." (Eph. 2:8). Acts 15:11 teaches that eternal salvation is by grace. "But we believe that through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ we shall be saved, even as they." The grace of God includes all that God has done that men might be saved. Note carefully these verses. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God . . ." (I Jn. 3:1). "But God commendeth his love toward us, in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." (Rom. 5:8).

However, the fact of grace does not preclude conditions to be met on the part of the sinner. Noah found favour or grace in the eyes of God then he was told to build the ark. (Gen. 6:8). Ruth obtained her food by grace, yet she had to glean it. (Ruth 2:2,3). We are saved by grace but we must do what God requires. The fact of grace does not nullify conditions to be met. Obedience simply enables man to accept what God's grace offers, namely, salvation. God's grace is extended to all (Tit. 2:11) but it must be accepted by obedience to the Gospel.

It is erroneous therefore to conclude that the Church of Christ denies salvation by grace. Many of the very ones who make this fallacious accusation deny any obedience at all to God. The Bible, however, clearly points out that we must obey. I Peter 1:22 says, "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth . . ." "But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves." (Jas. 1:22). Paul says vengeance will be taken on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ." (II Thess. 1:8). Obedience makes it possible for man to accept what God offers.

STRANGE THINGS ABOUT THE CHURCH OF CHRIST—III

Another strange thing which is said about the Church of Christ is that they think they are right and everybody else is wrong.

Can we know who is right and who is wrong in matters of religion? Though some will say "no," it is obvious that everyone decides in his own mind that some are right and some are wrong religiously. Thus, when someone says, "You ought not to say that you are right and others are wrong," I would contend that there is not a person on earth with religious convictions who does not do this very thing.

Is there any way in which we may be able to tell who is right and who is wrong? We cannot determine the right or wrong way by man's wisdom. The wisdom of the world knew not God. "For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, . . ." (I Cor. 1:21). The right or wrong way cannot be determined by the number of people who believe and practice a doctrine, e.g. there are far more Hindus than professed Christians. It must be by the Word of God and that alone. A "thus saith the Lord" is the only solution. Someone says, "You believe that everybody is wrong who disagrees with you." No, I believe everybody is wrong who disagrees with the Word of God. The Bible is right. If what we or anyone else are doing is not authorized by the Scripture, it is wrong. This does not mean, however, that there will not be differences of opinion. I may think the building for worship should be out of cream colour brick while someone else's opinion would be red colour brick. There is a vast difference between matters of opinion and matters of faith.

Does it make any difference if one is wrong in religion? Truth means freedom. (Jn. 8:32). Does freedom matter? Error means condemnation. (II Thess. 2:10,12). Does condemnation matter? Albert G. Lemmons once said, "You know, it doesn't make any difference what you believe as long as it doesn't make any difference where you spend eternity."

INSTRUMENTAL MUSIC IN WORSHIP

Many arguments have been offered in favour of using instrumental music in worship. It will be the purpose of this article to consider some of the more common arguments.

Some say, "Christians use them in the home, then why not in the church?" There are many things morally right that are religiously wrong. It is morally right to wash your hands but religiously wrong. Jesus condemned the Pharisees for washing their hands. It was nothing wrong with what they were doing, but where they were doing it. (Mark 7:1-3). There are babies in the home but this is no argument for infant baptism.

Then there are those who say, "Instrumental music is only an aid." Instrumental music, however, is not on the same par with song books, pews, lights, etc. These are only aids. When they are taken away we still have singing. But, when the instrument is supplied we have singing and playing. As long as a piano is silent it would not affect the worship either. But, when one plays the piano he is adding that which has not been authorized by God.

Others say, "It was practiced under the law of Moses, why not today?" If having instrumental music under the law of Moses proves we can have it today in worship, then we can also have incense, infant church membership, animal sacrifices, and the Sabbath day, because they were under the law of Moses. The man who keeps the law in one point is debtor to keep it in all points. (Gal. 5:3). To uphold our practices by what the law of Moses taught is to place Moses' authority on an equal with Christ's.

Still others say, "The Bible does not say we cannot use the instruments." God did not tell Noah not to use teak in the ark, but he did tell him to use gopher wood. The very fact that he told him to use gopher wood excluded every other kind of wood. We do not operate on the basis of what the Bible does not say but on what it does say.

In spite of the arguments offered in favour of instrumental music in worship there remains no Biblical authority for it whatsoever.

TEMPTATION

A study of temptation reveals that it is no respecter of persons. Genesis 39 shows that the *young* are tempted. After Joseph was brought down to Egypt he was made overseer to Potiphar's house. "And Joseph was a goodly person, and well favoured." (Genesis 39:7). Potiphar's wife tempted Joseph "Day by day" (Gen. 9:10); yet he yielded not to the temptation. Joseph's reason is most intriguing. "How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?" (Gen. 39:9). The *strong* are also tempted. Judges 16 gives the account of Samson and Delilah. Samson was tempted on four different occasions by Delilah who had been promised money by the lords of the Philistines if she discovered the source of Samson's strength. Samson yielded to the temptation and the Scripture says, "And he wist not that the Lord was departed from him." (Jud. 16:20). The *noble* are tempted. The account is given in II Samuel 11 how that David, being drawn away after his own lust, committed adultery with Bathsheba. II Samuel 12:10 tells the result of David's sin. "Now therefore the sword shall never depart from thine house." Not only are the noble tempted but the *common* are tempted. In Joshua 7 we find that Achan was tempted by a "... Babylonish garment, and two hundred shekels of silver, and a wedge of gold of fifty shekels weight, ..." (Josh. 7:21). Achan and all that he had were stoned as a result of yielding to temptation. Finally, the *divine* are tempted. Matthew 4:1 says, "Then was Jesus led up of the spirit into the wilderness to be tempted of the devil." The Lord, however, overcame temptation in every instance. "For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." (Heb. 4:15).

Let us remember the words of Peter in I Peter 5:8, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour."

SAVING FAITH—I

For anyone to please God he must demonstrate his faith in active obedience. Obedience to God is something that cannot be undermined. It is stressed time and again in the Bible. "Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth . . ." (I Peter 1:22; cf. II Thess. 1:7-9). The question is not, "Are men saved by faith?" The question is, "When are men saved by faith?" Are they saved by faith *before* that faith leads them to any act of obedience at all? Or is salvation by faith *after* that faith has manifested itself in active obedience? In Hebrews 11:30 the Bible says, "By faith the walls of Jericho fell down, *after* they were compassed about seven days." The walls fell down by faith but they did it after that faith had demonstrated itself. The blind man in John 9 received his sight by faith, only after he had complied with the condition laid down by the Lord to wash in the pool of Siloam. Ephesians 2:8 tells us that we are saved by "grace through faith." The grace of God is conditioned on man's faith. If this were not the case, all men would be saved because God's grace has appeared to all men. (Tit. 2:11).

Salvation is by a live faith since a faith without obedience is a dead faith. Galatians 5:6 says, "For in Jesus Christ neither circumcision availeth any thing, nor uncircumcision; but faith which worketh by love." What avails? Faith working! A faith which has not manifested itself in obedience is a dead faith "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." (Jas. 2:26). The word, "dead", means "inoperative," "without power," "without any force at all." The body plus the spirit equals a live man. The body minus the spirit equals a dead man. Now, note the parallel. Faith plus works equals a live faith. Faith minus works equals a dead faith. There can be no salvation by a dead faith. "Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the Kingdom of heaven; but he that doeth the will of my father which is in heaven". (Matt. 7:21).

SAVING FAITH—II

The faith that saves is a live, active, and obedient faith. That which avails is faith "working through love." (Gal. 5:6). I call your attention to two different passages. One is found in the book of James and the other is by the apostle Paul in Ephesians. James 2:24 says, "Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only." Ephesians 2:9 reads, "Not of works, lest any man should boast." Many have considered these two passages of Scripture to be incongruous. However, there is no problem with the writings of God; the problem is with man. There are two different types of works under consideration. James is talking about works which are *included* in God's plan to save; works which perfect faith. (James 2:22). These works are absolutely essential. Note carefully the following passages: "Little children, let no man deceive you: he that doeth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous." (1 John 3:7). "But in every nation he that feareth him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with him." (Acts 10:35). Some asked the question, "What shall we do, that we might work the works of God?" (Jn. 6:28). "This is the work of God, that ye believe on him whom he hath sent." (Jn. 6:29). One must obey the works that God commands to be pleasing.

Ephesians 2:9 considers works which are *excluded* from God's plan to save; works that would earn for us our salvation. The following statement will serve to illustrate, "Lord, you owe me my salvation. I never made one mistake on earth, therefore I have my salvation by works." When man sins one time he cannot be saved by these works. Salvation is by grace through faith. The works that Paul is talking about are human, meritorious, boastful works, far from what God commands. These works will not save because man is a sinner. (Rom. 3:23). After we do all that God has told us to do we must count ourselves as unprofitable servants. Note carefully Luke 17:10, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."

SAVING FAITH—III

We continue our theme concerning "faith" by noticing that salvation is in Christ since one cannot get into Christ by merely believing. Ephesians 1:3 tells us that all spiritual blessings are in Christ. The following are some of the spiritual blessings that are to be found in Christ: salvation (II Tim. 2:10); new creatures (II Cor. 5:17); redemption (Eph. 1:7); forgiveness (Col. 1:14); no condemnation (Rom. 8:1); inheritance (Eph. 1:11); promises. (I Cor. 1:20). It is absolutely essential that one possess these spiritual blessings to be a child of God. But, these spiritual blessings are in Christ; hence, one must get into Christ to be a recipient of these blessings.

Salvation does not come by any one act of obedience. The Bible conditions salvation upon several things. Acts 10:43 says, "That whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Does this passage teach salvation by a faith without any further acts of obedience? No! If that were the case the passage would teach salvation by a dead faith and salvation can only be attained through a live, active, and obedient faith. Furthermore, if one took *only* Acts 10:43 he would have to take the position that one could be a hater of God and still be saved. But, we know that one could not hate God and be a Christian. Salvation does not come by faith *alone* just as salvation does not come by baptism *alone* or any other act of obedience. I Peter 3:21 says baptism saves us but let it not be understood that baptism alone saves! There is no salvation in any one act of obedience. Acts 11:18 says that God has granted "repentance unto life" to the Gentiles. But, does that mean that salvation comes just through repentance without faith or any other act of obedience? Of course you can see how such could not be true. I John 4:7 says, "Everyone that loveth is born of God . . .", but does that mean all an individual must do is love regardless of whether he believes or not? Surely, you can see that the Bible does not condition salvation on any act of obedience. Faith, repentance, confession and baptism are all necessary to be saved.

HOW WE FAIL TO PUT GOD FIRST—I

In Matthew 6:33 Jesus said, "But seek ye first the Kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you." The context indicates that Jesus is talking about such things as food, shelter, clothing, etc. While these things are important, many, in pursuing these items along with a number of other material things, have fallen short of seeking first the Kingdom of God. Let us therefore consider some of the ways in which we can fail to put God first.

We can fail to put God first in our lives by putting our family first. Jesus said, "If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea, and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple." (Luke 14:26). The Lord is not giving us instructions to have a literal hate for our family. The explanation seems to be found in Matthew 10:37. "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me." Thus, it seems that we can fail to put God first by loving our family more than God. How can we put our family first? One may put his family before God by refusing to become a Christian because it would be displeasing to his parents. This is a tragic thought that one would let his family interfere with his obedience to the Gospel, yet many do. Others put their family before God by staying home to entertain Aunt Sue and Uncle George who dropped in unexpectedly before Bible class began. It is a shame that people will violate a foremost Biblical principle because of their loved ones. Hebrews 10:25 says, "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is; but exhorting one another; and so much the more, as ye see the day approaching." Also, many sacrifice faithfulness to the church to please an unbelieving husband or wife. Not only will such an individual lose his own soul, but he will cause the destruction of his mate's soul because he will probably never win him to Christ by setting such an example.

HOW WE FAIL TO PUT GOD FIRST—II

Let us note some other ways by which we can fail to put God first. We can fail to put God first when we may seek our innocent pleasures before doing the will of God. The Bible does not condemn all kinds of pleasure and recreation but it does give guidance in choosing our recreation. When we fail to observe these principles and choose rather to please ourselves with what we want to do we make innocent pleasures sin. When we become so involved in our different hobbies, whether it be working, fishing, hunting, reading, etc., to the extent that we have no time for God, we commit sin. If we reserve no time for personal work, Bible study, visiting the sick, or to teach a class, yet are able to find time for our favorite hobby, we should consider if we have put God first. Many have taken innocent things and made them sin simply because they left God out of their lives. No matter what the pleasure is it can be made sin if used improperly.

We can fail to put God first in our lives by seeking the approval of society. Man is a social being and therefore seeks the approval of fellow human beings. It is possible for him to have the approval of both men and God. The Bible clearly says this in Luke 2:52, "And Jesus increased in wisdom and stature and in favour with God and man." Also in Acts 2:47, "Praising God, and having favour with all the people." Hence, one can be pleasing both to God and man. However, many seek the approval of men more than that of God. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue; For they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God." (John 12:42, 43). Ananias and Sapphira were motivated to lie by two unholy desires: the love of money and the praise of men. They wanted to be praised as Barnabas and others had, thus they lied. Many seek the approval of men when they refuse to oppose something their neighbours do for fear of being ashamed. Paul admonishes though in II Tim. 1:10, "Be not thou therefore ashamed of the testimony of our Lord..." Are we failing to put God first?

PASTORS

Often times preachers are referred to as "pastors" either by themselves, by the members of denominations or by some members of the church. There is no doubt that many gospel preachers are pastors in a practical sense since they often do the work of pastors; yet, there is no scriptural foundation to say that the preacher is a pastor. The reason for this is because the role of the preacher is not the same role as the pastor or shepherd. The role of the preacher is to preach the word. (II Tim. 4:1-5).

The Bible makes clear that men who are termed "pastors" are also termed "elders" or "bishops." (Acts 20:17, 28). These three different terms simply suggest the type of men to be selected. The word "pastor" means to feed or shepherd the flock. The word "elder" means of mature age and experience. The word "bishop" means to oversee or superintend. The Bible also makes evident that each congregation had a plurality of these men. (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1). Never does the New Testament speak of one "pastor" or one "elder" or one "bishop" over one congregation or over several congregations.

Unless the preacher of a local congregation is also a chosen elder, he is not "the pastor" but the preacher or minister.

It was mentioned above that many preachers are pastors in the practical sense. There are various signs of the "pastor system" in the Lord's church today. Who is the first person notified when a brother or sister becomes ill? It is the *preacher*. Notice, however, what the Bible says, "Is any sick among you? let him call for the elders of the church." (Jas. 5:14). Another sign of the "pastor system" is required visitation. While the preacher should visit the sick, he should do so because he is a concerned Christian and not because he is the preacher.

It may be observed at this point that if the preacher does his work and the elders do their work, there will be no difficulty in determining who the pastors are.

WHAT BAPTISM REQUIRES

Baptism, first of all, requires water. "Can any man forbid water, that these should not be baptized..." (Acts 10:47). Baptism also requires much water. "And John was baptizing in Aenon near to Salim, because there was much water there..." (John 3:23). I know a glass of water would be much water compared to a teaspoon of water. You cannot prove sprinkling, pouring, or immersion by that expression alone. But it is inconceivable to me that the amount of water to sprinkle or pour upon an individual would be called "much water."

Baptism involved going to the water. "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water..." (Acts 8:36). Mark 1:5 tells us that John went to the Jordan river to baptize. If baptism is sprinkling or pouring, why did John go all the way to the RIVER Jordan? He went because he needed much water. One must go down into the water for baptism. Acts 8:38 says "...they went down both into the water, both Phillip and the eunuch; and he baptized him." Let us note that both the administrator and the candidate are IN the water.

Someone may say, "Well, that proves nothing." This may be the case, but the same thing that keeps sprinkling preachers out of the water today would have kept them out of the water then had they sprinkled.

While in the water baptism involved a BURIAL. "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism..." (Romans 6:4). Neither sprinkling or pouring is a burial. Someone says, "Oh, but we are buried spiritually." The Bible says, "Buried in baptism". When one is plunged into the water, he is in a watery grave. He would not live ten minutes unless brought out of the water. When we bury an animal that has died, we do not sprinkle or pour dirt on it. We cover it completely and this is what is involved in baptism- Finally, baptism involves a resurrection. "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him..." (Col. 2:12). After the resurrection, Phillip and the eunuch came up out of the water. (cf. Acts 8:38, 39).

Have you been baptized according to the scriptures ?

WHO MUST BE BAPTIZED ?

The New Testament clearly teaches that there are certain requirements which must precede baptism. Jesus said in Matthew 28:18,19, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost." Note that people are taught and then baptized. Thus, those who are scripturally baptized must first be *taught*.

The Bible also points out that those who are to be baptized must *believe*. The account of the conversion of the Philippian jailor indicates that he first heard the gospel preached and then believed it before he was baptized. After Paul and Silas had been freed from their prison stocks, the jailor asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved ?" (Acts 16:30). The Bible says in answer to this question : "And they said, Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house. And they spake unto him the word of the Lord, and to all that were in his house. And he took them the same hour of the night and washed their stripes; and was baptized, he and all his, straightway. And when he had brought them into his house, he set meat before them and rejoiced, believing in God with all his house." (Acts 16:31-34; cf. Mark 16:16).

Those to be baptized are ones who have *repented*. Peter told his audience on the day of Pentecost to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sin, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 2:38). Only the individual who has truly repented of his sins can be baptized.

The individual to be baptized must *confess* the name of Jesus. The Bible says in Acts 8:36,37, "And as they went on their way, they came unto a certain water : and the Eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized ? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God."

Have you met the proper requirements before baptism for remission of sins ?

INFANT BAPTISM

We hear a great deal about infant baptism. Let us take each of the requirements for baptism, discussed in the last article, and apply them to the infant.

We said those to be baptized must first be *taught*. This would exclude infants because they cannot be taught. An eight day old baby cannot even entertain thoughts much less learn something as far as the gospel plan of salvation is concerned.

Those baptized must *believe*. This excludes infants because he cannot believe that Jesus is the Son of God. We would not baptize a grown man if he did not believe that Jesus was the Son of God. If it is wrong to baptize a grown man in the absence of faith it is wrong to baptize an infant in the absence of faith.

Baptism is for those who have *repented* of all sin but a baby has no sin to repent of, thus, he cannot be baptized. Baptism is only for those who have the capacity to sin. An infant has not and cannot commit sin. Sin is "transgression of the law." (I Jn. 3:4). Children, however, do not know the law; thus, they cannot sin. Sin is failing to do that which a person knows to be good. (Jas. 4:17). Children are not capable of knowing good and therefore cannot neglect to do it. The Bible affirms time and again that little children are innocent. (Deut. 1:39; Matt. 18:3; 19:14). A small child does not bear an inherited guilt from Adam. Ezekiel 18:20 says, "The son that sinneth, it shall die. The son shall not bear the iniquity of the father, neither shall the father bear the iniquity of the son: The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon him, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon him."

Baptism is for those who *confess* their faith in Christ but if little children have no faith in Christ, how can they confess it?

Have you been baptized according to the Scriptures?

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM—I

There are a great many people who contend that baptism in the Holy Spirit is the baptism required of individuals today for salvation. John said, "... He shall baptize you with the Holy Ghost..." (Matt. 3:11). Thus, Christ is the administrator of the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The time of this baptism was the first century. It terminated when the apostles and the house of Cornelius died because they were the only subjects. The element of this baptism is the Holy Spirit. (Matt. 3:11).

It should be noted that baptism in the Holy Spirit was never a command given to men generally. The Holy Spirit always came as the result of a specific promise to specific individuals. Furthermore, there are only two cases of Holy Spirit baptism on record in the New Testament. Jesus told the apostles, "But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you..." (Acts 1:8). They received this power when the Holy Spirit descended upon them on the first Pentecost following the resurrection of Jesus. (Acts 2:1-4). These men received the Holy Spirit in order that they might be guided in their teaching of the truth of the Gospel of Christ. This was in fulfillment of Christ's promise to that effect. (John 16:13).

The only other case of baptism in the Holy Spirit is recorded in Acts 10. The people involved here were Cornelius and the members of his household. These people were the first Gentile converts to the Gospel. The Holy Spirit was poured out on them in order to convince prejudiced Jews that God had now accepted all men for salvation. Luke said in Acts 10:44, 45, "While Peter yet spake these words, the Holy Ghost fell on them which heard the word. And they of the circumcision which believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because that on the Gentiles also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost."

Thus, one should clearly see that the Holy Spirit came as a result of a specific promise to specific individuals. Next time we want to observe a common objection to this.

HOLY SPIRIT BAPTISM—II

Those who contend that Holy Spirit baptism is available for men today use the following verse of scripture in an attempt to support their contentions: "And it shall come to pass afterward that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh." (Joel 2:28). The contention is made that the word "flesh" include all men of every age. Thus they argue that men today are eligible to receive the baptism of the Holy Spirit. This contention will not stand up in the light of investigation. From a Biblical perspective, there are only two kind of flesh—Jew and Gentile. The Spirit was poured out upon the Jews in the person of the apostles in Acts 2. Gentiles received a pouring out of the Spirit in Acts 10 in the case of Cornelius and his household. The Bible says, "... they (the Jews) ... were astonished ... because that on the *Gentiles* also was poured out the gift of the Holy Ghost." (Acts 10:45). When reference was being made to Cornelius and his household, they were referred to as the *Gentiles* as a nation of people. Thus, all flesh—Jew and *Gentiles* flesh—received the baptism of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit baptism was not intended for every individual is obvious from the fact that there are no other records of such baptism in the New Testament, nor are there found any commandments of Holy Spirit baptism.

It should be noted that on both the day of Pentecost and on the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius two baptisms were administered in each instance. The apostles received Holy Spirit baptism and then administered baptism in water to 3,000. (Acts 2:41). Paul, however, said in Ephesians 4:5 that there was but "one baptism." Was it Holy Spirit baptism or water baptism? Jesus, in Matthew 28:19,20 said to do three things: go, teach, and baptize. He said to do it, "even unto the end of the world." What kind of baptism, Lord? One that could be administered by a *man* and that is water baptism because Jesus is the only one who could administer the baptism of the Holy Spirit. (Matthew 3:11).

WHY MEN ARE LOST--I

The Bible clearly points out that many will be lost and few will be saved. (Matt. 7:13,14). This is the case in spite of the fact that God's grace is offered to all (Tit. 2:11); Christ died for all (Heb. 2:9; I Jn. 2:2; I Cor. 15:3,4); the saving power of Christ's blood is easily available to all (Rom. 5:8,9; 6:3-5) the alternative to salvation is so terrible. (Matt. 25:46; Rev. 20:10-15; II Thess. 1:7-9). The question we raise is, "Why, in view of the above considerations, are men lost?"

Some men are lost because they never come to the realization that they are lost. Paul makes it clear that all have sinned. (Rom. 3:9-12, 23). Man sins when he fails to do that which is right, "All unrighteousness is sin". (I Jn. 5:17). "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin." (Jas. 4:17). Man sins when he transgresses God's law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law". (I Jn. 3:4). To do that which God has forbidden man to do is sin.

Those who do not realize that they are lost do not realize that sin separates a man from God. Isaiah says, "Behold, the Lord's hand is not shortened, that it cannot save: neither is his ear heavy, that it cannot hear: But your iniquities have separated between you and your God, and your sins have hid his face from you that he will not hear." (Isa. 59:1,2). They do not realize that the wages of sin is death. "For the wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord". (Rom. 6:23).

Since men do not realize they are lost they do not seek to be saved. And, since they are not seeking to be saved, they do not seek the knowledge of God's Word by which men are saved. "... and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls". (Jas. 1:21, cf. Rom. 1:16,17; John 8:32).

Is this the reason that you have not yet rendered obedience to the Gospel of Christ?

WHY MEN ARE LOST—II

Last time it was observed that some are lost because they never come to the realization that they are lost. Another reason some are lost is that, even though they realize they are lost, they love the world too much to do anything about their condition.

Materialism is a philosophy of life that is condemned in the Bible. Matthew 6:24 says, "Ye cannot serve God and mammon." The materialist's attitude inverts God's order. It puts the world in dominion over man rather than having man in dominion over the world. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world." (I Jn. 2:15).

There are various reasons why man should not love the "world." First, the things of the world are of relatively little value. In Matthew 16:26 we find, "For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" The point that Matthew makes is that one soul is worth more than all the world has to offer. Second, the things of the world will soon pass away. "And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof." (I Jn. 2:17). Therefore, we must not put our trust in the riches of the world. Third, when men love the world the love of God is not in them. (I Jn. 2:15). I Corinthians 16:22 is relative to this when Paul says, "If any man love not the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be Anathema."

This causes them to esteem their own ideas so highly and therefore become filled with pride. This causes them not to study the Bible and to refuse acceptance of God's word. As a result, they remain ignorant of the word. But, men cannot be saved without a knowledge of God's word. "How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed? and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? and how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Rom. 10:14).

Is this the reason you have not obeyed the Gospel of Christ?

WHY MEN ARE LOST—III

Thus far, we have considered two reasons why men are lost. Some are lost because they do not realize they are lost. Others, even though they realize they are lost, love the world too much.

Still, many others are lost because they believe error. Note carefully the two following passages. "Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God : because many false prophets are gone out into the world." (I Jn. 4:1). Proverbs 16:25 says, "There is a way that seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death." The Bible teaches clearly that there is the possibility of believing a lie. In I Kings 13 we find that the man of God believed the old prophet but verse 18 says, "he lied unto him." The man of God suffered death as a result of disobedience. Eve believed the lie told her by the Devil in Genesis 3. It is the truth, however, that saves, not lies. (Jn. 8:32; 17:17).

Why do people believe lies ? Why do people believe false doctrine and suffer condemnation ? Many believe lies because they do not have a love for the truth. "And with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish : because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie." (II Thess. 2:10, 11). Many believe error because they believe only what they hear or read about the Bible rather than studying it for themselves. Men must study the Bible for themselves. The Bereans were more noble than the Thessalonians because they studied the scriptures. (Acts 17:11). I am convinced that the abundance of false doctrine is due to the ignorance of the Bible by members of the Lord's church along with many others. People simply do not know the scriptures as they should. Many preachers can preach false doctrine right in the pulpit and elders of the church never know it. Many cannot detect error because they do not know the truth.

Are you lost because you believe false doctrine ?

WHY MEN ARE LOST -IV

In the last few articles attention has been given as to why men are lost. We have seen that, (1) some are lost because they do not realize they are lost, (2) some are lost because, even though they realize they are lost, they love the world too much, and (3) some are lost because they believe error.

Now we want to notice that others are lost because they do not see the immediate punishment of sinners. In times past, on certain occasions, God immediately manifested his wrath for sin. Let us now note some of the examples of this to be found in his Word.

First, I call your attention to the case of Nadab and Abihu as recorded in Leviticus 10:1, 2. Paraphrasing these two passages, these two sons of Aaron offered "strange fire" to God which he had not commanded. On this occasion, fire went out from the Lord and consumed them. "Now this seems like a trivial thing for which to be punished," someone may say. Yet the fact remains that God says what he means and he means what he says. He commands absolute obedience on the part of man. We may not understand why he commands us to do a certain thing, but the very fact that he commands us makes it imperative that we obey.

Another case is that of Korah, Dathan, and Abiram as recorded in Numbers 16. (cf. Jude 11). On this occasion Korah, Dathan, Abiram and certain of the children of Israel gathered themselves against Moses and Aaron, accusing them of taking too much authority. We find in verses 31 and 32 that God caused the earth to swallow them up, thus punishing them for their sin.

Another example of God's immediate punishment is recorded in Acts 5:1-11. In this instance Ananias and Sapphira were stricken by God for lying. They sold a possession for a certain amount and left the impression that they had given all the profit to the church, when in reality, they had kept some back.

The Bible clearly declares the punishment of those who disobey God. Will you be lost because you do not see the immediate punishment of sinners ?

WHY MEN ARE LOST—V

Thus far we have observed four reasons why men are lost. Some are lost because (1) they do not realize they are lost, (2) even though they realize they are lost, they love the world too much, (3) they believe error, and (4) others do not see the immediate punishment of sinners.

Still others are lost because they think they only have to be good morally. Many say, "I don't curse, lie, cheat, steal, gamble, commit fornication, etc.—surely I will be saved." Although, moral goodness is to be desired and is essential to be pleasing unto God, moral goodness in and of itself does not save. To say that a person can be saved simply because he is good morally is to say that his salvation is without several things.

First, such a salvation is without blood. "And almost all things are by the law purged with blood; and without the shedding of blood is no remission". (Heb. 9:22). Therefore, no man can be saved without blood. Hebrews 10:4 makes it clear that the blood of bulls and goats will not take away sin. Hebrews 9:11-17 teaches that it is the blood of Christ that takes away sin. (Note verse 12; cf. Col. 1:14; Eph. 1:7). A salvation which denies the blood of Christ affirms that Christ died in vain. It says that the Son of God came to this earth, suffered, and died for nothing.

Second, a salvation on the basis of moral goodness is a salvation without being in Christ. All spiritual blessings are in Christ. (Eph. 1:3). Some of those blessings are : salvation (II Tim. 2:10); no condemnation (Rom. 8:1); new creatures (II Cor. 5:17); and promises. (II Cor. 1:20). The Bible teaches that we are baptized into Christ. (Gal. 3:27; cf. Rom. 6:1-6). Therefore, we are baptized to obtain these spiritual blessings. Out of Christ there are no spiritual blessings.

Third, a salvation based on morality alone is a salvation without being added to the church. "And the Lord added to the church daily such as should be saved. (Acts 2:47). Will you be lost because you think you only have to be good morally ?

WHY MEN ARE LOST—VI

Thus far we have considered five reasons why men are lost. Some are lost because they do not realize they are lost. Some are lost because they love the world too much. Some are lost because they believe error. Others are lost because they do not see the immediate punishment of sinners. Still, others are lost because they think that they only have to be good morally.

A sixth reason some are lost is that they do not remain faithful. The Bible makes it clear that to become a Christian one must : hear (Rom. 10:17); believe (Jn. 20:30, 31); repent (Acts 17:30; 2:38); confess (Rom. 10:9, 10); and be baptized. (Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5). One must, however, bear the fruit of the Spirit. "But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, temperance." (Gal. 5:22, 23). The Christian must add what has been termed the "Christian graces." "And besides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith virtue : and to virtue knowledge; And to knowledge temperance; and to temperance patience; and to patience godliness; and to godliness brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness charity. For if these things be in you, and abound, they make you that ye shall neither be barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins. Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election sure : for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall : For so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." (II Peter 1:5-11). We must remain faithful if we are going to receive the crown of life. (Rev. 2:10).

It is taught clearly that the possibility of falling is real. I Corinthians 10:12 says "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall." (cf. Gal. 5:4; II Pet. 2:20-22). In the light of these Scriptures, let us take heed that we remain faithful.

THE UNITY OF GOD'S PEOPLE

There is no greater blessing than the unity of God's people. Many passages testify to the desirability of unity among all who serve God. David said, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psa. 133:1; cf. Phil. 2:2; Eph. 4:3; Jn. 17:20, 21; I Cor. 1:10).

Certainly, you will agree that all these passages indicate the desirability of unity among God's people. Yet, a look at present day denominationalism testifies to the fact that unity has not been attained. Presently, there are millions who profess to follow Christ who are divided into hundreds of denominations, with each of these denominations bearing a name which is different from the name worn by every other denomination. Each denomination espouses, teaches, and practices at least some doctrine different from that believed, taught, and practiced by every other denomination.

Someone may ask, "But do not all the different denominations, when considered collectively, combine to form the one church in the eyes of God?" Not at all! There are many who believe that this is the case and who attempt to find scriptural support for such a view from the Parable of the Vine and the Branches. Jesus said, "I am the vine, and ye are the branches." (Jn. 15:5a). Some would like to interpret this to mean that Christ is the one vine and all the denominations are branches of his spiritual body. This interpretation however cannot stand honest and intelligent investigation. First, Christ was talking to his disciples and not to religious sects, to individuals rather than to groups. Hence, he was saying that he is the vine and the branches are the various individuals who are attached to him through their faith and obedience. Second, proof that the branches are not representative of different churches is seen in the fact that each branch would be bearing a different fruit. Now what type of vine bears a different fruit on each of its limbs? All who follow God's word will bear the same fruit. What kind of fruit are you bearing?

CAUSES OF DIVISION

Last time we noted that there were millions who profess to follow Christ who are divided into hundreds of denominations bearing a name which differs from the name worn by every other denomination. Let us consider the causes of this situation. The basic cause is the rejection of the Bible as the authoritative Word of God. There are, however, specific causes for this situation.

First, many people simply do not hold doctrine to be very important. Because of this much false doctrine has been and is being proclaimed. False doctrine is preached when people: (1) add to the gospel (II Jn. 9-11; Rev. 22:18) or (2) subtract from the gospel (Rev. 22:19), or (3) modify the gospel. (Gal. 1:6-9).

Second, much division exists because many have a higher regard for the views of human ancestors than for the doctrine of Christ. In Matthew 15:1-4, Christ rebuked the Pharisees for their traditions. Traditions are not wrong but when they stand in open violation of the Bible, they become wrong. Much division would be eliminated if people did not exalt their traditions above Christ and His Word.

Third, and closely related to this is the fact that many are impressed by the views held by the multitudes of people. For many, the view to hold is the one held by the multitudes. However, the multitudes are often wrong. (Ex. 23:2; Matt. 7:13,14). It was the multitudes who were instrumental in the crucifixion of Christ.

Fourth, many regard their own views more highly than they do the Gospel of Christ. Such people say, "I don't see why this or that is not acceptable even though the Bible teaches that it is not acceptable to God."

Let us return to a "thus saith the Lord."

DIVISION IS CONDEMNED

In our last article we noted the basic causes of division. Now we want to present evidence showing why denomination-ism is not pleasing to God.

It is evident from Biblical teaching that unity is upheld and that division is condemned. The apostle Paul says in Eph. 1:22,23, "And hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be the head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all." (cf. Col. 1:18). After affirming this he says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body . . ." (Eph. 4:3,4). Paul makes it clear that there is only one church which meets with God's approval. Paul penned these words under the direction of the Holy Spirit. Thus, every religious organization which has been brought into existence by the ideas, plans, and actions of men stand in open violation to the teaching of the Bible. No man has ever been given divine authority to start a church of his own. Jesus said, "Every plant, which my heavenly Father hath not planted, shall be rooted up." (Matt. 15:13).

Christians in the city of Corinth divided themselves over preachers. Some claimed to follow one man, some professed to be the disciples of another. Paul condemned this division by saying: "Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and there be no divisions among you: but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgement." (I Col. 1:10). Among "the works of the flesh" Paul listed "factions, divisions, parties." (Gal. 5:20). He said to the brethren at Rome, "Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned; and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly; and by good works and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple." (Rom. 16:17,18).

ADULTERY

Adultery is the misuse of the sexual relationship that God intended for the husband and wife. Technically, the word "adultery" is unchastity between one or more married people; however, in the scriptures the word "adultery" and the word "fornication" (improper sexual actions between single persons) are used interchangeably.

Adultery is classed with the most grievous of sins. "Be not deceived: neither fornicators, nor idolators, nor adulterers, . . . shall inherit the kingdom of God." (I Corinthians 6:9,10). Let us now consider how this can be committed.

First, this sin can be committed before marriage. The question is raised, "How can we know we are compatible without sexual relations before marriage?" This is the very same method used by the devil with Adam and Eve. He raised a question and created doubt that brought about their sin. Forgiveness of the sin can be obtained but the scar will remain forever.

Second, adultery may be committed *during* marriage. In Genesis 39 the account is given of the attempts of Potipher's wife to seduce Joseph. Joseph fled her attempts and gave two reasons for not committing adultery. He said it would be a sin against God and against his master, Potipher.

Third, one may commit adultery by obtaining a divorce, and remarrying without scriptural grounds. One may comply with the civil laws and at the same time fail to meet God's laws. When the mate dies, one is free to marry again. (1 Cor. 7:39). Jesus said, "Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery . . ." (Matt. 19:9).

Fourth, one may be guilty of adultery by looking on a woman to lust after her. "But I say unto you, that whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committeth adultery with her already in his heart." (Matt. 5:28). The word "lust" suggests unlawful desire. When one is tempted and he refrains because it is inconvenient, he is guilty of adultery.

"They which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God." (Gal. 5:21).

THE PLATFORM FOR UNITY—I

In Ephesians 4:3-6 Paul says, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace. There is one body, and one Spirit, even as ye are called in one hope of your calling; one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father of all, who is above all, and through all, and in you all."

These passages have appropriately been described as the Christian's seven-fold platform for unity. If you noted these scriptures carefully you observed that there are seven ones: "*one body, one Spirit, one hope, one Lord, one faith, one baptism, one God and Father.*"

We are told there is "one God". What does the Bible mean when it says "one God?" It means there is one being known as God and Father. We are told there is "one Lord." What does this mean? It means there is one Saviour, Jesus Christ. We are told there is "one Spirit." What does this mean? It means there is one being known as the Holy Spirit. Surely, we understand what "one" means when reference is being made to God, the Lord, or the Holy Spirit.

This same section of scripture says there is but "one body". Just as there is one God, one Lord, one Spirit, there is one body. The Bible makes it clear that the church is the body. Ephesians 1:22, 23 says, "and hath put all things under his feet, and gave him to be head over all things to the church, which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all". (cf. Col. 1:18). Since there is but "one body" and the "one body" is "the church", it follows that there is but one church. It is just as much out of order to speak of a plurality of gods as it is to speak of a plurality of churches. The Lord has but one spiritual body, the church. "...all the members of that one body, being many, are one body: so also is Christ". (I Cor. 12:14). The only conclusion we can come to in the light of these Biblical facts is that there is but one divine New Testament church.

THE PLATFORM FOR UNITY—II

Last time we observed the Christian's seven fold platform for unity in Ephesians 4:3-6 and gave special attention to the *one body*. This time we want to note the expression, *one baptism*. Just as Paul affirmed the purpose of the other six words in Ephesians, he affirms that there is but one baptism. One of the most controversial subjects in the Bible is baptism. The most controversy today centers around Holy Spirit baptism. It should be noted that on both the day of Pentecost and on the occasion of the conversion of Cornelius, two baptisms were administered.

On the day of Pentecost, the apostles received the baptism of the Holy Spirit and then commanded and administered baptism in water for 3,000 people. (Acts 2:41). In Acts 10, Peter and his Jewish companions witnessed the baptism of Cornelius and his household in the Holy Spirit and then commanded those same people to be baptized in water. (Acts 10:47). We have already noted, however, that Paul said there was but one baptism. (Eph. 4:5). Was it Holy Spirit baptism or water baptism? Jesus in Matthew 28:19, 20 said to do three things : go, teach, and baptize — “even unto the end of the world.” This baptism was to be administered by a man and the only kind man can administer is water baptism because Jesus is the administrator of Holy Spirit baptism. (Matt. 3:11).

Thus, the “one baptism” is the baptism performed in water and it is the one in effect today. When the Bible says there is one baptism it means exactly the same thing in so far as one is concerned as it means when it says “one God,” “one Spirit,” “one Lord,” etc. If there is more than one baptism, there is more than one God, one Spirit, or one Lord. I believe in one baptism because I believe in one God, one Spirit, and one Lord. In past articles it has been shown that the one baptism is immersion.

THE PLEA OF THE LORD'S CHURCH

We do not ask you to believe or practice anything that is not in harmony with the Word of God. We do ask you to give up every doctrine or practice for which you cannot find authority in the New Testament because that is the covenant under which we live. Anything before the New Testament is too old. Any teaching newer than the New Testament is too new.

The church of Christ has been accused of not believing in the Old Testament. This, however, is far from the truth. The old Testament came from God and is just as inspired as the New Testament. But when Jesus died on the cross the law of Moses was taken out of the way and the new one was established. "He taketh away the first, that he may establish the second." (Heb. 10:9; cf. Col. 2:14; Eph. 2:14). The Old Testament served its purpose and was replaced by the New Testament. "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:24, 25). The fact that it was necessary to give another law indicates something was lacking in the first. "For if that covenant had been faultless, then should no place have been sought for the second." (Heb. 8:7). The first covenant was to one nation, did not forgive sins, and was dedicated by the blood of animals. The second covenant is for all nations, forgives sins, and was dedicated by the blood of Christ.

We believe in the Old Testament just as much as anyone else. Moreover, we quote from its great books time and time again. But, we no longer submit ourselves to its laws for the New Testament has taken its place. The Old Testament is the New Testament concealed and the New Testament is the Old Testament revealed. We plead with you to follow the New Testament. Submit yourselves to its teachings. We ask you to be open-minded and consider the matters we present with thoughtfulness and careful consideration.

IS TITHING COMMANDED ?

Numerous instances of the use of tithes are found both in secular and also in Biblical history. Both the Phoenicians and the Greeks offered a tithe. In Biblical history the two most prominent instances are : Abraham giving a tenth of his spoils to Melchizedek. (Gen. 14:20; Heb. 7:2). Jacob devoting a tenth of all his property to God if he should return home. (Gen. 28:22). Tithing, then, originated long before the law of Moses and continued to be practiced under the law just as the blood of animals was offered. But, when did the law of tithing end ? When the Lord died on the cross, he blotted out the law. (cf. Col. 2:14). We now live under a New Covenant. "For a testament is of force after men are dead : otherwise it is of no strength at all while the testator liveth." (Heb. 9:17). "Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." (Gal. 3:24, 25). It must be concluded then that the Mosaic law has been taken out of the way and that tithing in its strictest sense is no longer binding.

Does this mean, however, that we are not to give under the New Covenant ? Does this mean that we are not to be as liberal in giving as those Jews ? If this were the case why did Jesus say, "That except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven." (Matt. 5:20).

The New Testament teaches us to give as we have been prospered with liberality. (I Cor. 16:2, 3). Someone will invariably say, "Does the New Testament teach to give a tenth ?" The New Testament does not teach to give a tenth, neither does it teach us to give less than a tenth; it teaches us to give liberally. Do you think that just because we are under grace that less is expected of us ? The religion of the Jews was national while the New Covenant embraces a universal religion. How much more then are our responsibilities ! Barnabas and the poor widow gave all. By studying such Biblical characters we should be able to determine how much is liberal.

THE MEANING OF BIBLE AUTHORITY

What does Bible authority mean? It means that everything believed and practiced in religion must have the Bible as the ultimate standard in authority. "And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus . . ." (Col. 3:17). To do anything "in the name of the Lord" means to do it by Christ's authority or by his power which is inherent in the Word of God. This clearly is the meaning as Acts 4:7-10 teaches. The question is asked, "By what power, or by what name, have ye done this?" The answer Peter gives is ". . . by the name of Jesus Christ. . ." We must not: add to (Rev. 22:18); subtract from (Rev. 22:19); or modify. (Gal. 1:6-9). We must do everything "in the name of the Lord."

II Cor. 5:7 says, "For we walk by faith, not by sight." "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God." (Rom 10:17). "But without faith it is impossible to please him." (Heb. 11:6). These passages of scripture make it clear that to "walk by faith" is to do only that which is clearly authorized by the Word of God. We should have a "thus saith the Lord" for what we believe and practice in religion.

In contrast to the above, many have contended that what is not specifically forbidden by the Bible is in some way authorized. Their statement is, "Well, it does not say anywhere that we cannot do such and such." But, is this correct reasoning? We do not operate on what the Bible does not say! We operate on what the Bible does say; what it does authorize! A classic example of deviating from what God had said is the case of Nadab and Abihu. (Lev. 10:1,2). They did that which was not authorized by God and were destroyed. When man does more than that which God has authorized he makes himself equal to do the same. No man, organization, institution, etc. has the right to authorize. All authority resides in God and he has delegated this authority to his Son who in turn delegated it to Spirit-guided men who wrote "the Word of God." (I Thess. 2:13). Let us be guided by the Bible as God's authority.

BIBLE—THE TRUE STANDARD

We have observed some false standards of authority in the past and briefly the fact that the Bible is the true standard. Now let us consider the chain of authority. Authority inherently resides in God. He is the creator and the sustainer of the universe. (Gen. 1:1; John 3:1-3). He has "the right to command and give final decisions." All authority has been given unto Christ.

"All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." (Matt. 28:18). Christ then delegated authority to his apostles, as they were guided by the Holy Spirit. "Verily I say unto you, whatsoever ye shall bind on earth shall be bound in heaven: and whatsoever ye shall loose on earth shall be loosed in heaven." (Matt. 18:18; cf. John 14:26; 16:13). The apostles in turn were able to write the very words of God. "... when we received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God. . ." (I Thess. 2:13). All of this simply means that the very authority of God resides in the Bible. The order is from God to Christ to Spirit-guided men who were enabled to write the Bible. The Bible is our standard of authority in all spiritual matters; not visions, not dreams, not feelings, not traditions, not preachers, but the word of God.

Note some of the facts concerning the Bible. *It is inspired.* "All scripture is given by inspiration of God. . ." (II Tim. 3:16). The American Standard Version is more accurate when it says, "Every scripture inspired of God. . ." *It is written.* "And many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book: But these are written. . ." (John 20:30,31). It has been delivered *once for all.* (Jude 3). It is complete and able to furnish man unto every good work. (II Tim. 3:17). There are to be *no additions.* (Rev. 22:18). There are to be *no subtractions.* (Rev. 22:19). And, there are to be *no modifications.* (Gal. 1:6-9). The Bible is *authoritative.* (II John 9-11). Let us respect the Bible as the word of God.

I AM RESOLVED WHAT TO DO—I

In Luke 16 the account of the unjust steward is given. The steward was accused of wasting the goods of a rich man and his job was going to be taken away. "Then the steward said within himself what shall I do? for my lord taketh away from me the stewardship: I cannot dig; to beg I am ashamed. I am resolved what to do..." (Lk. 16:3,4). For the purposes of this article we will not observe what the steward did but it is of much interest to note the expression, "I am resolved what to do." Brother J.W. McGarvey says in *The Fourfold Gospel*, concerning this expression, "a way of escape comes to him in a sudden flash of discovery." The steward was actually saying, "I have it, I know now what to do."

Let us take this expression and find some application in our lives. Are you resolved what to do? Do you make resolutions? Do you know what it means to make resolutions? It literally means, "to begin to know" or "a knowledge of what one is going to do." What has been your life this year? What is it at the present? What do you intend to make of this coming year? I challenge you to "resolve what to do."

I challenge you to resolve to be a daily Bible reader. The Bereans "... were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the Word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so". (Acts 17:11). Why were the Bereans more noble? They searched the scriptures! Do you search the scriptures? It is sad today that so many people have such a lack of knowledge in spiritual matters. God has certainly got a controversy with his people because there is no knowledge of him. (Hosea 4:1). A knowledge of the Bible is absolutely essential. "Wherefore laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil speakings, as newborn babes, desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby." (I Pet. 2:1,2). A Christian must either grow or die! One method by which he can maintain spiritual growth is to study the Bible. You have heard it said, "an apple a day keeps the doctor away." Well, "a chapter a day will keep the Devil away." Resolve to be daily Bible readers.

I AM RESOLVED WHAT TO DO—II

In Luke 16 we find the above expression made by the unjust steward. "To resolve" literally means "to begin to know" or "a knowledge of what one is going to do." Do you possess a knowledge of what you are going to do for the Lord and his WORK? Do you make resolutions? You have heard parents say to their children, "that went in one ear and out the other." This is the way resolutions are for a lot of people—"they go in one year and out the other."

Last time we observed that we should be daily Bible readers. Now I challenge you to sincerely exemplify gospel truth. An example is, "a pattern or model after which anything is made or fashioned." Christ left His people an "example." "For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that ye should follow his steps." (II Pet. 2:21). Christ has left us the example and if we follow him we will become examples for others. Paul could say, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (I Cor. 11:1).

The power of example simply cannot be overestimated. Jesus said to and about his disciples, "Ye are the salt of the earth; but if the salt has lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of man." (Matt. 5:13; cf. 5:14-16). The salt of Palestine was gathered from the marshes and therefore not in its pure form. Because of foreign substances it would lose its savour and become useless. The Lord teaches, therefore, that a disciple can lose his influence. Paul reminded the Corinthians of the power of example when he identified them "epistles of Christ" (II Cor. 3:3) "known and read of all men." (II Cor. 3:2). Peter impressed upon Christian wives the power of example when he said the husband could be won by the manner of life of the wife. (I Pet. 3:12). Example is such a powerful force that even death cannot destroy it. Even though Abel had been dead for many years, his gifts spoke of him. (Heb. 11:4). Revelation 14:13 says, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." Resolve to exemplify gospel truth.

I AM RESOLVED WHAT TO DO—III

Thus far we have seen two things for which we should resolve to be—daily Bible readers and examples of gospel truth. Now, I challenge you to resolve to attend every service of the Lord's church possible. It is certainly a true statement that, "if absence makes the heart grow fonder, how some people must love the church." The early Christians came together upon the first day of the week to worship. (cf. Acts 20:7). The Bible warns about forsaking the assembly. "Not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is . . ." (Heb. 10:25). Where do you plan to be on Sunday morning one year from this Sunday? There is the possibility of sickness or even death but with the exclusion of these if you don't know where you will be you are on dangerous ground.

There are some principles in the scriptures that would show the necessity of being at every service possible, "Seek first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness and all these things will be added unto you." (Matt. 6:33). The "kingdom of God" is the church and "his righteousness" is the salvation in the church. This means that the church and salvation should come first in our lives.

"Redeeming the time because the days are evil." (Eph. 5:16). To redeem the time is to make good use or to realize the value of time. Time should be used to its best possible advantage. You must decide how you will use your time. You can either spend your time worshipping God with the other saints or sleeping, reading the newspaper, watching the "goggle box." or doing something else. Are you *redeeming* the time?

We should be lovers of worship. Note the Psalmist's words in Psalms 42:1,2,4; 84:1,2,10. The writer brings out the fact that we should love to worship God.

Titus 2:14 says to be "zealous of good works" and Titus 3:1 says be "ready to every good work." You will admit that all the worship periods are good works. To be indifferent toward these services is to disregard divine teaching to be "ready to good works." Resolve to attend all the services.

I AM RESOLVED WHAT TO DO—IV

The above statement the unjust steward made in Luke 16:8 continues to compel our interest. In considering things for which we should resolve to do, I would suggest today that we resolve to be generous with our time, talent, and money.

Each of us should be generous with our time. Every person has 24 hours in a day and 168 hours in a week. The question now is this: How much of that time do you plan to give to the Lord? It seems that it is difficult for most people to give two to three hours a week to the Lord in worship. "I just don't have the time," is their quibble. Do you have time to watch T.V., listen to the radio, fish, hunt, etc.? If you have time for these activities but not time for the Lord, you need to re-examine your life!

Let us resolve to be generous with our talent. God expects each person to do according to his ability. In Matthew 25, we have the parable of the talents. The Lord gave talents to three men according to their ability. To one man he gave five talents, to another, two talents, and to another, one talent; "to every man according to his several ability." (Mt. 25:15). The Lord took account of these men and found that the one talent man had not produced according to his ability. Note the result of this man's failing to use his talent, "And cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (Mt. 25:30). He was not condemned for fornication, or murder, or adultery but for failing to do that which was right. It is certainly a true statement, that ability plus opportunity equals responsibility. If we have various abilities for the Lord and opportunities to excel in those abilities then the responsibility is automatic.

Let us resolve to be generous with our money. Acceptable giving must be according to our prosperity. As we prosper the Lord's cause should prosper. (I Cor. 16:2). Acceptable giving must also be willingly. (II Cor. 9:7). We are not to give with the attitude of not wanting to, but willingly.

Will you make resolutions in these three areas?

I AM RESOLVED WHAT TO DO—V

When the unjust steward made this statement recorded in Luke 16:8, he had a full realization of what he intended to do. Do you have a knowledge of what you intend to do today, tomorrow, and the rest of your life? Surely, the successful life would be the planned life. I hope that you will make it your plans, if you have not done so already, to resolve to work for greater peace and unity among God's people.

I can think of no better resolution for a child of God. It certainly is the case that there is dissension, strife, and discord among many people of God. The effects of such are tremendous. Such conduct affects our young people. On the one hand, Mama and Daddy tell their children to love the Lord more than anything else in the world and on the other hand the same children see strife, dissension, and discord between their parents. Then the same parents say they don't understand what happened to their children who fell away. We will certainly not put an end to strife in the church until strife in the home is stopped.

Of the seven things that God hates in Proverbs 6:16-19, one is "he that soweth discord among brethren." God hates discord among brethren! What do you think God thinks about people, elders, preachers, etc., who allow, and in some cases, urge discord? One of the very things which contribute to the cheap Christianity being peddled by many today is the toleration of such sins as the above. Elders, who "watch for souls" (Heb. 13:17) should be ready and willing to exercise discipline in this area.

Paul made it clear that we "speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among" us. (I Cor. 1:10). In Ephesians 4:3 he said, "Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." Are we speaking the same thing? Are we keeping the unity of the Spirit? Not in all places by any means. I am reminded also of what Jesus said in Matthew 5:9. "Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God." Can you be called a child of God because you are a peacemaker? Let us resolve to work for greater peace among God's children!

AN ANALYSIS OF ACTS 16:30

There are many important questions in life. Will the world be dominated by communism one day? Will there be another depression? Will cures be found for many of the dreaded diseases which people have? All of these questions are important but the most important question anybody could ever ask is found in Acts 16:30. The Philippian jailor said to Paul and Silas, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" If people could comprehend the importance of this question, all others would be trivial. Let us spend a little time analyzing this important question.

The jailor asked, "*What?*" Of all the things that God has commanded of mankind, "what" is it that man must do today?

The question is "*What must?*" The jailor did not ask "what may I do?" or "what might I do?" or even "what should I do?" He inquired "what must I do?" He knew that something God has commanded was essential. A similar statement is found in Acts 9:6. Jesus told Saul to go into the city and it would be told him what he "*must*" do.

The jailor asked, "*What must I?*" Note that he did not ask about his brother or sister. He did not ask about Moses, Abraham, or any of the other outstanding Old Testament characters. He asked about himself.

He also asked, "*What must I do?*" The denominational concept among many is that you do not have to do anything. Some modern day people might say, "Why, don't you know you can't do anything." The jailor knew more about the way of salvation than many learned people. He knew that there was something to do! "Not everyone that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven; but he that *doeth* the will of my Father which is in heaven." (Mt. 7:21; cf. Jas. 1:22-25; Lk. 6:46; I Pet. 1:22).

The jailor also asked, "*What must I do to be saved?*" This man was concerned about his salvation. Undoubtedly he recognized the fact that the most horrible thing in the world was to be LOST. Are you lost?

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?—I

You may ask some important questions in life but, there is no more important question than the above. Men do not need merely an answer to such a question—they need the right answer ! What source supplies the answer or answers to such an important question ?

The answer is not to be found in feelings. One may feel entirely satisfied about his spiritual condition and be lost. The fact of Joseph's good health in Egypt did not change the way Jacob felt back home. Feelings are not the source for important questions. (cf. Pro. 16:25; Mt. 7:21-23).

The answer is not to be found by the conscience. The conscience urges an individual to do that which he thinks is right. One must always act in harmony with his conscience. But, the conscience does not tell us what the truth is. We must learn the truth from the Bible. One may live in "all good conscience" (Acts 23:1) and be the "chief of sinners." (I Tim. 1:15).

The creeds of men are not the source for this important question. Many publish a creed to set out the position of their group. This creed is regarded as authorization by many and on an equal with the Revelation of God's word. If the creed contains just the Bible, as it is contended by many, why have the creed ? If it contains more than the Bible it is too much. (Rev. 22:18). If it contains less than the Bible it is too little. (Rev. 22:19). Any time a person rejects the Bible he is accursed. (Gal. 1:6-9).

The traditions of your forefather's are not the proper source for this question. There are many who do what they do because their parents do it. Our parents may be wrong. It is not true that a person does right just because he does what his parents do. We must study the Bible for ourselves—find its truth and obey it. To do what you do because other people do it or did it is to reject the Bible as the proper source for religious answers. (cf. Mt. 15:1-9).

Let us appeal to the Bible for the right answers !

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?—II

In answering this question, we observed last time that the Bible is the only true source of right religious answers. Hence, we ask, "What does the Bible teach that I must do to be saved?"

The Bible teaches that for a man to be saved, he must realize he is lost. Many people go through life thinking their relationship with God is just fine while their souls are as black as midnight. Maybe some of the very ones who read this article have not yet found the right answer to salvation. The Bible declares that "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Rom. 3:23). "There is none righteous, no, not one." (Rom. 3:10). One may be committing sin by failing to do that which is right. I John 5:17 says, "All unrighteousness is sin; and there is a sin not unto death." Failing to do that which is right is sin! The one-talent man was not punished because he was an immoral figure but because he failed to do that which is right. The Bible says in James 4:17, "Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

One may commit sin by transgressing God's law. "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law; for sin is the transgression of the law." (I John. 3:4).

There are certain things God has absolutely forbidden man, for example, the works of the flesh in Galatians 5:19-21. When man indulges in that which God has forbidden him, he transgresses God's law.

Since men do not realize they are lost by failing to do that which is right and transgressing God's law, they do not seek to be saved. And, since they are not seeking to be saved they are not seeking the knowledge of God's Word by which they can be saved. Note carefully James 1:21, John 8:32, and Romans 1:16, 17.

Are you lost?

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED ?—III

Not only must a person recognize that he is lost and need to be saved, he must also humble himself before God. Because the people of Nineveh humbled themselves before God, they were spared from destruction. Jonah had said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown" (Jonah 3:4). But the people repented of their sin and were spared as a result. There is much teaching in the Bible regarding the fact that for a man to be pleasing to God, he must humble himself. I Peter 5:5,6 says, "God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace unto the humble. . . Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time." Of the seven things which God hates in Proverbs 6:16-19, the first is a "proud look." A proud look is naturally first for Solomon said in Proverbs 16:18, "Pride goeth before destruction; and a haughty spirit before a fall." Pride is the mental and moral condition that precedes all other sins. Augustine who lived in the 4th and 5th centuries named pride as man's greatest sin. It may seem wrong to call pride a greater sin but it seems that Jesus acknowledged it as a greater sin concerning the Pharisee and Publican. "The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, God, I thank thee, that I am not as other men are, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this publican. I fast twice in the week, I give tithes of all that I possess. And the publican, standing afar off, would not lift up so much as his eyes unto heaven, but smote upon his breast, saying, God be merciful to me a sinner. I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other. . ." (Luke 18:11-19). The Pharisee did not really pray to God, he preached a sermon about his own good merits. He and the pronoun "I" are mentioned five times in this short prayer. Matthew 5:3 says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit : for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

How about us. Do we have a proud look ? Do we look down our noses at other people ? Do we regard some as inferior ? Do we think we are superior to others ? If so, such will keep a man out of heaven. To be saved, a person must humble himself before God.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?—IV

To be saved, a person must not only humble himself before God, but he must be willing to sacrifice anything and everything to serve the Lord. In Matthew 19:16-21 Jesus was approached by a young man who asked, "What good thing shall I do, that I may have eternal life?" Jesus said "Keep the commandments." The young man asked, "Which?" Jesus then said, "Thou shalt do no murder, Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not bear false witness, Honour thy father and thy mother: and, Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself!" The young man replied, "All these things have I kept from my youth up: what lack I yet?" Then the Lord "beholding him loved him" (Mark 10:21) said, "go and sell that thou hast, and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven: and come and follow me." When the young man heard that saying, he "went away sorrowful: for he had great possessions."

Did the Lord demand total commitment of this young man? Did he expect him to sacrifice? Surely you can see that the answers to these questions are in the affirmative. I would have you to observe that Jesus, when he saw the man walk away, did not say, "Well at least give a large donation to the poor." No, the Lord did not say that. He expected sacrifice. This young man allowed his possessions to stand between him and the Lord. It is certainly not wrong to possess possessions but it is wrong to allow your possessions to possess you. The love of money is what troubled this young man and the same thing is bothering people today. Jesus certainly made a true statement when he said, "How hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter the Kingdom of God!" (Mk. 10:24). I think you will find that to a large degree as prosperity goes up that spirituality goes down. To be saved you must sacrifice possessions.

You may have to sacrifice to the extent that you go against your parents. (cf. Lk. 14:26; Mt. 10:37). Whatever stands between us and the Lord must be sacrificed.

WHAT MUST I DO TO BE SAVED?—V

Thus far we have considered the source by which the answer to the above question can be found. We have noted that for a person to be saved he must: (1) realize he is lost, (2) humble himself before God, and (3) sacrifice anything and everything to serve the Lord. Now we want to observe one final thing, i.e., one must obey Christ.

In answer to the question, "What must I do to be saved?", Paul said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and thy house". (Acts 16:31). In Acts 2:37 the Jews, after hearing the first Gospel sermon, asked, "Men and brethren, what shall we do?" Peter commanded them to "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins". (Acts 2:38). In Acts 9:6, Saul asked "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" Three days later Ananias commanded him to be baptized. (Acts 22:16).

Three times the question, "What must I do?", is found and three times the answer is different. Why are the answers different? Do the people who gave the answers conflict with one another? NO! The answers are different because the situations are different. If you, like the jailor, have never put your faith in Christ, you must, for "without faith it is impossible to please him". (Heb. 11:6). If you, like the Jews, believe, you must "repent and be baptized". (Acts 2:38). If you, like Saul, believe and have repented, you must "arise and be baptized and wash away thy sins". (Acts 22:16). This is of course on the confession that you make that "Jesus is the Christ the Son of God". (Acts 8:37; Rom. 10:9,10).

Someone may object and say, "But the jailor just believed," or "He was saved by faith only." In the first place the jailor could not believe, for the Word of the Lord had not been spoken to him. Acts 16:32 says, "They spake unto him the Word of the Lord." In the second place, the Bible teaches that in the same hour of the night he was baptized; thus, his salvation was not by faith only.

Are you saved?

THE ORGANIZATION OF THE NEW TESTAMENT CHURCH

In structure the New Testament Church is the most simple organization in the world, yet it is the strongest and most durable. The greatest weakness in the institutions of men is their elaborate organizations.

The church of the New Testament has a divine head and Christ is that head. Paul used the present tense which in the Greek indicates continuous action. Christ is the head of the church and he will continue to be the head of the church until after His resurrection from the dead. "Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more . . ." (Rom. 6:9). Since Christ was made the head of the church after His resurrection and since He was raised to die no more, it follows that He can never die out of office. Hence, has no successor. Furthermore, the New Testament knows nothing about any person representing Him as the head of the church on earth.

The church has elders in each congregation. Paul and Barnabas appointed elders in every church. (Acts 14:23). In Acts 20:17, 28 there are three terms applied to the same men. These three different terms simply suggest the type of men who should be selected. First, they were to be men of mature age and experience. This is the meaning of the term "elder" or "presbyter." Second, they were to have the oversight of the congregation. This is the meaning of the word "bishop" or "overseer". Third, they were to feed or tend the flock as a "shepherd" or "pastor." Each congregation had a plurality of these men which is evident from numerous passages. (Acts 14:23; 20:17, 28; Phil. 1:1). Never does the New Testament speak of one "elder" or one "bishop" or one "pastor" over one congregation or over several congregations.

The church has deacons in each congregation. From Acts 6 we learn of the appointment of the first deacons. Paul addressed the Philippian letter ". . . to all the saints in Christ Jesus which are at Philippi, with the bishops and deacons". (Phil. 1:1). The word deacon means a "servant." Acts 6:1-6 makes it clear that their work was to look after the temporal welfare of the congregation under the elders. Like the elders, the New Testament also speaks of a plurality of deacons.

ARE MEN SAVED BY FAITH ?

There is no more important question than that which the jailor asked in Acts 16:30, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" The Bible teaches that we are saved : (1) by grace (Eph. 2:8), and (2) by faith (Eph. 2:8, 9). One cannot be saved without faith- (Heb. 11:6). Often times people ask, "Are men saved by faith ?" This is not the question. Everybody that has ever been pleasing unto God Almighty did so by faith. The question is, "When are men saved by faith ?" Are men saved by faith *before* that faith leads them to any act of obedience or are men saved by faith *after* that faith has demonstrated itself in active obedience unto God ?

The Bible makes it clear that faith must be demonstrated before it is of any avail. In John 9 the blind man was told to wash in the pool of Siloam. What healed him ? The water in the pool or his faith in compliance with the command of the Lord ? Surely, it was the faith of the men. But, would he have ever received his sight if he had not washed in the pool ? Certainly not, for the washing was a condition laid down by the Son of God before the power to cause him to see would be used. Thus, the man received his sight by faith but only *after* that faith demonstrated itself in obedience unto God.

Hebrews 11:20 teaches that the walls of Jericho fell down by faith, after they were compassed about seven days. Did the walls fall down as soon as the Israelites possessed faith ? No ! They fell down *after* that faith was demonstrated; namely, in walking around the walls as God had directed.

It is clear, therefore, that when the Bible tells us to possess faith in Jesus Christ, it does not mean to possess a faith that does not manifest itself in obedience. The faith which does not obey is what the Lord was talking about in Matthew 7:21-23. Many will say "Lord, Lord" but only the one who "does" the will of the Father will be saved. Simply to believe is not enough because the devils believe and tremble (Jas. 2:19).

IS THE BELIEVER SAVED BEFORE HE IS BAPTIZED ?—I

Last time we observed that man is saved by faith. The question is not, "Are men saved by faith?" The question is, "Are men saved by faith *before* any act of obedience or are men saved by faith *after* that faith has demonstrated itself in obedience to God?" It was shown last time that the faith that blesses is the faith that demonstrates, obeys, etc.

Today I want to examine the theory that the lost man is saved the very moment he believes that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God. This theory can be shown to be false by showing that faith without further acts of obedience will not save. We have already talked about this in one sense; namely, that Naaman and the blind man in John 9 did not receive their blessings until they demonstrated their faith. In the same way faith without further acts of obedience will not save. James 2:26 says, "For as the body without the spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." The word "dead" means "inoperative, without power, without any force at all." Faith without works is "without power." Some allege that this conflicts with Paul's statement in Ephesians 2:8,9. "For by grace are ye saved through faith. And that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man 'should boast.'" However, there is no contradiction here at all. Both are inspired by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit certainly does not contradict itself.

Paul and James are discussing two different kinds of works. Paul is talking about works which are *excluded* from God's plan to save. This is evident from his statement "lest any man should boast." Works which a man might boast in are human meritorious works, the design of which is to earn salvation. If man could devise a plan by which he could save himself, he could do away with the grace and accomplish his own salvation. Such is impossible when man sins one time. James discusses works which are *included* in God's plan to save. The works included are works which perfect faith. (cf. Jas. 2:22). Those included are the commandment of the Lord, obedience to which is absolutely essential. Men are not justified by faith only. (Jas. 2:24).

IS THE BELIEVER SAVED BEFORE HE IS BAPTIZED ?—II

The theory that the lost man is saved the very moment he believes that Jesus is the Christ the Son of God can also be shown to be false by showing that one can be a believer and still not be saved. The above theory leaves no room for an unsaved believer; hence, if it can be shown that there is at least one person who is a believer, but who is also lost, then the "faith only doctrine" will be proven false. The Bible does not simply give *one* example of this but *many*. Some Jews believed on the Lord but they did not confess that faith. "Nevertheless among the chief rulers also many believed on him; but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him, lest they should be put out of the synagogue: for they loved the praise of men more than the praise of God". (John 12:42, 43). Here, some believed but they refused to confess and the Bible teaches clearly that one must confess Jesus. "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thy heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved". (Rom. 10:9).

Some Jews believed on the Lord as John 8:31 teaches, "Then said Jesus to those Jews which believed on him, . . ." But these same Jews were told that they were of their "father the devil". (John 8:44). They were *believers* but of the *devil* !

The Bible teaches that the believer has the right to become a Son of God. "He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he the power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name". (John 1:11, 12). The word "power" means "right" or "liberty of action." John is saying that the believer has the right to become a Son of God. Can a person become that which he already is ? If I am a member of the Lions Club, can I become a member of the Lions Club ? No ! If the believer is a Son of God, can he become a Son of God ? The answer is obvious.

The believer faces the possibility of perishing. "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him *should not perish*, but have everlasting life". (John 3:16).

IS THE BELIEVER SAVED BEFORE HE IS BAPTIZED ?—III

The theory that a man is saved at the point he believes in Jesus can also be shown to be false by showing that other acts of obedience, i.e., besides faith, are necessary to salvation. One must *hear* the Gospel. In Romans 10:13-15 we find: "For whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. How then shall they call on him in whom they have not believed: and how shall they believe in him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach, except they be sent? as it is written, How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things!" Then we find in verse 17, "So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Not only must one hear the Gospel, he must *repent*. "I tell you, Nay: but, except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish." (Lk. 13:3). And the times of this ignorance God winked at: but now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." (Acts 17:30). One must also confess Jesus as Lord, "That if thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness: and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." (Rom. 10:9, 10). "Whosoever therefore shall confess me before men, him will I confess also before my Father which is in heaven." (Mt. 10:32).

One must also be *baptized* (immersed) in water. The act of obedience of being baptized stands between the penitent believer and obtaining the remission of sins (Acts 2:38); having ones sins washed away (Acts 22:16); becoming a son of God (Gal. 3:26, 27); entering Christ (Rm. 6:3-5); being saved (I Pet. 3:21). Every time God has seen fit to connect baptism and salvation. (Mk. 1:4; 16:16; LK. 3:3; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:21). Notice carefully what I am about to say. Baptism is no more important than the other acts of obedience to the Gospel as some have falsely accused. But, baptism is simply the last step in becoming a Christian and it is just as essential as any other act of obedience.

IS THE BELIEVER SAVED BEFORE HE IS BAPTIZED ?—IV

The theory that the lost man is saved at the very moment he believes Jesus is the Christ the Son of God has been shown to be false by demonstrating : (1) that faith without further acts of obedience will not save, (2) that one can be a believer and still not be saved, and (3) that other acts of obedience, i.e., besides faith, are necessary to salvation.

Let us now note some of the basic errors of those who hold to the false doctrine of "faith only." First, they read only a part of what the Bible teaches about being saved. They ignore such passages as Acts 11:18. "When they heard these things, they held their peace, and glorified God, saying, then hath God also to the Gentiles granted repentance unto life." This passage makes it clear that repentance is necessary to salvation. They ignore Romans 10:9, 10 which makes it clear that confessing Christ is essential to salvation. They ignore Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 which makes it evident that being immersed in water is essential to remission of sins.

Second, they refuse to seek the design of baptism in passages of scripture which mention baptism. They claim to be able to deduce that the design of baptism is to show that one has already been saved. Many base this claim on versions of the Bible which have had the words of men inserted. *The Living Bible* has I Peter 3:21 as follows : "That, by the way, is what baptism pictures for us : In baptism we show that we have been saved from death and doom by the resurrection of Christ . . ." This is not what the original text says ! It should be, "The like figure whereunto even baptism *doth also now save us . . .*" *The Living Bible-Paraphrased* should be *The Dead Bible-Perverted..* This claim is also based on passages which mention faith and salvation but say nothing about baptism. (cf. Jn. 3:16; Rm. 5:1; Eph. 2:8, 9). This is a fallacious argument. Using this kind of argument, I could say that faith itself was not essential to salvation. Faith is not mentioned in I Pet. 3:21 or in Acts 11:18. But, this would be fallacious reasoning also.

Third, they put a "not" where the Bible does not put one. (cf. MK. 16:16).

WHO REALLY BELIEVES?

Recently columnist Tom Anderson called attention again to an article originally published in the October 1967 edition of "Christianity Today," in which it was reported that sociologist Jeffery Hadden had contacted 10,000 clergy men asking their belief on certain fundamental basic Bible beliefs. 7,441 replied :

1. Do you believe in Jesus' physical resurrection from the grave?
 - a. 51% of the Methodists said no.
 - b. 35% of the United Presbyterians said no.
 - c. 30% of Episcopal priests could not.
 - d. 33% of Baptists could not.
2. Do you believe in the Virgin Birth of Christ as a biological miracle?
 - a. 60% of Methodists said no.
 - b. 44% of Episcopalians said no.
 - c. 49% of Baptists said no.
3. Do you believe in Satan and the existence of demonic evil power?
 - a. 62% of Methodists said no.
 - b. 37% of Episcopalians said no.
 - c. 47% of Presbyterians said no.
 - d. 33% of Baptists said no.
4. Do you believe that the Bible is the inspired word of God?
 - a. 89% of Episcopalians did not,
 - b. 82% of Methodists did not.
 - c. 81% of Presbyterians did not.
 - d. 57% of American Lutherans did not.

This type of information causes us to wonder. Just how far *are* the denominations away from the truth ?

WHAT DOTH HINDER ME ?—I

In Acts 8:36 the Eunuch said, "See here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized?" Phillip told the Eunuch that if he believed with all his heart, he could be baptized. The question asked by the Eunuch is a very interesting one for there are many things which hinder people today.

Lack of faith hinders some people. In Luke 7:30 the "Pharisees and lawyers rejected the counsel of God against themselves, being not baptized." These Jews did not have faith. (Mark 11:31). This causes many people to fail to be baptized today. They do not really believe that the Bible is God's word and that it must be obeyed. A person that *really does believe* the Bible is from God, will obey it's teachings. Others fail because their faith is not strong enough to motivate them to action. In John 12:42,43 many of the chief rulers believed on Jesus but because of the Pharisees they did not confess him. These people had faith but their faith was not such that it led them to demonstrate it in acts of obedience to God.

Lack of understanding as to the necessity of baptism hinders. Denominational preachers have taught that baptism is non-essential by saying that it is a sign that one has already been saved and that it does not have to be complied with for salvation. Nothing could be further from the truth. Baptism, according to the scriptures, is given as a command. In both Acts 2:38 and Acts 22:16 baptism is commanded. It is a command because it is given in the imperative mood. Thus, those who say one does not have to be baptized are saying that one does not have to obey a command of God. Are there any non-essential commands? No! Salvation from past sins is conditioned upon (1) faith (John 8:24; Heb. 11:6). (2) repentance (Lk. 13:3; Acts 17:30; 3:19), (3) confession (Rom. 10:9,10), and (4) baptism (Acts 2:38; 22:16; Mk. 16:16). Whenever preaching or teaching is being presented one is commanded to "try the spirits" (I Jn. 4:1) and "prove all things". (I Thess. 5:21). How about the teaching and preaching you hear? What hinders you from being baptized?

WHAT DOTH HINDER ME ? -II

Last time it was pointed out that two things often hinder people from being baptized : (1) lack of faith, and (2) lack of understanding as to the necessity of baptism. There are other things which hinder people from being baptized. Many are hindered from being baptized because they substitute something in the place of baptism. The Bible makes it clear that baptism involves, (1) water (Acts 8:36), (2) much water (Jn. 3:23), (3) going to the water (Acts 8:36), (4) going down into the water (Acts 8:38), (5) a burial while in the water (Acts 8:38; cf. Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), (6) a resurrection while in the water (Rom. 6:4; Col. 2:12), (7) coming up out of the water. (Acts 8:39). Someone may object to point 6 by saying that a resurrection while in the water is not substantiated by Roman 6:4 and Colossian 2:12. It is clear by the other scriptures which were enumerated that the element in baptism is water. The scriptures in question teach that in baptism one is raised; hence, one is raised from water. Moreover, it is obvious that baptism involves a resurrection, for the Eunuch came out of the water (Acts 8:39). If he had not been raised, he certainly would not have come up out of the water" for he would have died !

Although the Bible makes it clear that baptism involves the above steps, many have substituted sprinkling and pouring for baptism. It is admitted that in sprinkling and pouring there is water but, there certainly is not "much water." One may object and say, "A teaspoon of water would be much compared to a drop of water." Hence, it would be argued that one could not prove baptism by John 3:23. However, it should be noted that when John baptized he went to where there was "much water." If it took just a few drops why did John not stop at a "mudhole ?" Baptism involves going down into the water but this is not required in either sprinkling or pouring. Baptism also involves a burial and a resurrection but this is not required by sprinkling and immersion.

Have you been baptized according to the scriptures ? The Bible makes it clear that Baptism is necessary for salvation. (Mk. 16:16; Acts 2:38; 22:16; I Pet. 3:21; et. al.).

THE INCOMPARABLE CHRIST

He came from the bosom of the Father to the bosom of a woman. He became the Son of man that we might become the sons of God. He put on humanity that we might go from earth to heavên.

He left the region where the rivers never freeze, winds never blow, frost never bites, flowers never fade; where there are no under-takers, no doctors are needed, because no one is ever sick; where graveyards never haunt, death never comes, and where no funerals are ever conducted.

He was born contrary to the laws of nature, was reared in obscurity, and lived in poverty; only once did He ever cross the boundaries of His own small country; He had no wealth or influence, education or training, and His parents knew nothing of the niceties of social traditions.

In infancy, He startled a king; in boyhood, puzzled the wise; in madhood, ruled the course of nature and men's souls.

He healed the multitudes without medicine, and made no charge for His services. He never wrote a book, yet all the libraries of the world could not contain all the books that could be written about Him. He never wrote a song, and yet He has provided the themes for more songs than all earthly writers combined. He never founded a college, yet all the schools of earth have not had the students that sat at His feet. He never practiced medicine, yet has healed more broken hearts than the world has ever taken note of.

He never marshalled an army, never drafted a soldier, or fired a gun, yet no leader has ever had the volunteers, who, under his orders, made rebels stack arms and surrender to His command, never firing a shot.

He is the Star of astronomy, the Rock of geology, the Lamb and Lion of Zoology, the Harmonizer of all discords, and the Healer of all diseases.

Great men have come and gone; He lives on. Herod could not kill Him; Satan could not seduce Him; death could not destroy Him; and the grave could not hold him.

He laid aside His purple robe for a peasant's gown. He was rich but for our sakes became poor, that we might be rich. How poor? Ask Mary! Ask the wise men! He slept in another's manger; He rode another's ass; He was buried in another's tomb.

All others have failed; He, never.

The ever Perfect One, the Chief among ten thousand.

EVANGELISM—I

The Lord's church has many problems facing it. There could be no greater problem facing the church than its lack of concern for evangelism. I am glad that many brethren are now taking several steps to carry out the commission given to the church.

It has been said that the mission of the Lord's church is evangelism, edification, and benevolence. We need to take another look at the mission of the church. The Bible teaches that the church has a singular mission, namely, to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ to every creature. When this mission is enlarged upon, it includes edification of the saints and relief of the poor.

The church has the same mission which Christ had. This is the case because the church is the body of Christ. (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22,23). Christ evangelized on earth. "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost". (Luke 14:10). Furthermore, the Bible says that the Son of God would be called Jesus "for he shall save his people from their sins." (Matt. 1:21).

Brethren, we need to carry out the mission Christ had, namely, to preach the gospel to a lost and dying world. It has been estimated that a 157 souls die every minute without ever hearing about Jesus Christ. It has also been said two billion people have never heard about Christ. How many people do you suppose have never heard of the scriptural plan of salvation? Certainly, the figure would be enormous. The only solution to this devastating situation is the preaching of the word. "... it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe". (I Cor. 1:21). The commission has been given to us (Matt. 18:18-20; Mark 16:15,16; Luke 24:46,47). In the next few articles I want to ask the following questions: (1) Why was the early church able to carry out the mission of the church? (2) By what means did they carry out this mission? and (3) To whom did they carry out this mission?

EVANGELISM—II

Last time it was noted that the mission of the Lord's church is that of evangelism. The need to carry out this mission is evident when one considers the great number of people who have never heard the gospel message.

The early church carried out this mission. Why was it able to carry out the mission so effectively? In a word the early church was able to carry out the mission of evangelism because of its militant nature. By militant, I do not mean that it was associated with the burning of buildings and attacking those in positions of authority. This is the idea we have of militants today. When I say that God's church was militant I mean that it realized it was (1) an army and (2) engaged in a battle. Paul talks about the figure of a soldier many times. (cf. II Tim. 2:3; Eph. 6:10-17). As an army and realizing that a battle was going on the church employed both offensive and defensive tactics. This militancy caused the early church to have a tremendous impact on the Roman Empire. Everybody knew about the church. They either hated Christians or loved them. Early Christians are spoken as turning "... the world upside down..." (Acts 17:6). They were the "... sect, ... everywhere ... spoken against." (Acts 28:22).

This militancy resulted in the proclamation of the gospel to the world. (Col. 1:23). Is the church of the twentieth century carrying out the mission as did the early church? Is it turning the world upside down? The answer is NO! The church as a whole is unknown. Those who know it are indifferent toward it—they neither admire it nor hate it. Why is this the case? Thomas Warren asked, "Is it not because the church of the twentieth century is not doing *what* the church of the first century did, or else that it is not doing what it is doing the *way* the church of the first century did?" (*Spiritual Sword*, December, 1970, p. 1). Certainly the reason is the latter part of the question.

Next time we will show the means by which the early church evangelized.

EVA NGELISM—III

Last time it was observed that the early church was able to carry out the mission of evangelism because of its militant nature. We must now ask the question, "How or by what means can we carry out this mission?" There are two primary ways to carry out this mission : (1) word and (2) deed.

The Bible makes it clear that there is honour to those who proclaim the gospel by word. Paul says, "How beautiful are the feet of them that preach the gospel of peace, and bring glad tidings of good things !" (Rom. 10:15). The exalted position of the Christian can be seen in that his body is the temple of the Holy Spirit. (I Cor. 6:19, 20). Furthermore, Paul says that "all things are yours" when he speaks of the saints. (I Cor. 3:21).

Who must carry out this mission by word ? The preacher has a foremost responsibility. Paul told the young preacher Timothy to "preach the word". (II Tim. 4:2). The preacher must never forget his work as an evangelist. That work is stated simply in I Tim. 4:13. "Till I come, give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine." Not only does the preacher have this task but the elders also. They are to be able to "convince the gainsayers". (Tit. 1:19); Yet, many elders are not able to do this and are not striving to do so. Remember, this is one of the qualifications of elders. Every member must proclaim the gospel by word. Paul told the Corinthians to abound in the work of the Lord. He did not write specifically to preachers or elders or certain members but to "my beloved brethren". (I Cor. 15:58).

How can evangelism by word be carried out ? It can be done by personal work. Paul taught publicly and privately, i.e., from house to house. (Acts 20:20). Therefore, they that were scattered abroad went everywhere preaching the word". (Acts 8:4). Philip was engaged in personal work with the Eunuch. (Acts 8:26-40). The gospel can also be proclaimed in the pulpit situation. Note Peter's speech (Acts 2:14-40) and Paul's discourse. (Acts 17:22-31).

EVANGELISM—IV

Last time it was observed that the mission (evangelism) of the Lord's church can be carried out by word. There is honor to those who carry out the mission of the church by word. All Christians have a responsibility to engage in this mission.

Now, I want to raise the question, "Why must we preach the word?"

First, we must preach the word because wisdom for salvation comes by the word. Paul says, "And that from a child thou hast known the holy scriptures, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation through faith which is in Christ". (II Tim. 3:15).¹ James notes, "Wherefore lay apart all filthiness and superfluity of naughtiness, and receive with meekness the engrafted word, which is able to save your souls". (Jas. 1:21). It is the word that is able to make man wise unto salvation, not some operation of a supernatural agency. Salvation is dependent upon a knowledge of and obedience to the word of God, (John 8:32; I Pet. 1:22).

Second, we must preach the word because all the needs of men are furnished by the scriptures. Paul says that the word is profitable for (1) doctrine, (2) reproof, (3) correction, and (4) instruction in righteousness that the man of God may be perfect (II Tim. 3:16, 17).

Third, we must preach the word in its truth and simplicity because men will turn to fables if it is not preached. Paul told Timothy to "preach the word . . . for the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine . . . and they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables". (II Tim. 4:2-4).

Fourth, we must preach the word, because it is by the word of Almighty God that we will be judged. Jesus says, "He that rejecteth me, and receiveth not my words, hath one that judgeth him : the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day". (John 12:48). We will be judged by the things written in the books. (Rev. 20:12).

EVANGELISM—V

It has been shown that the early church carried out the mission of evangelism by being militant in its nature, i.e., it recognized that it was engaged in a battle. The early church employed two primary tactics to make the mission of the church a success: (1) word and (2) deed. Much consideration has already been given to evangelism by word. Another effective way to evangelize is by deed.

Evangelism by deed is perhaps greater than evangelism by word, for if what is said (word) is not practiced (deed) then the words are in vain. We preach by what we do as well as by what we say. Thus, we should "Practice what we preach." Many so-called Christians say one thing but do an entirely different thing. Then the cry is made, "your actions are so loud that I cannot hear what you say." There is much truth in this statement for if we do not practice that which we preach, that which we preach will not be heard. This principle is taught in Ezra 7:10. "For Ezra had set his heart to seek the law of Jehovah and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and ordinances." Note the sequence of Ezra's action: (1) he sought the law of Jehovah, (2) he practised the law and (3) he taught the law. Certainly, one cannot teach until he practices and he cannot practice until he learns. Luke said, "The former treatise I made, O Theophilus, concerning all that Jesus began both to do and teach". (Acts 1:1). It is significant that Jesus both did and taught.

One of the major reasons the Lord's church is not evangelizing more effectively is the lives of many of its members. Paul taught that we are to present our bodies a "living sacrifice." Further, he said we are not to be "conformed" to the world but rather, "transformed". (Rom. 12:1, 2). Christianity is more than warming a bench on Sunday. It is a way of life—a way to which more people need to give careful attention. How about the gospel you are preaching with your life? It is a foregone conclusion that all are preaching some kind of sermon.

EVANGELISM—VI

It has been observed the last couple of times that evangelism may be carried out by both word and deed. Last week specific attention was given to the fact that we evangelize by what we do as well as by what we say.

In continuing our thinking about evangelism by deed, I call your attention to the power of example. The power of example cannot be overestimated. Note the emphasis placed on example by Jesus and others.

Jesus emphasized the power of example when he said to and about his disciples the following: "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? It is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and to be trodden under foot of men". (Matt. 5:13). Salt in Palestine was gathered from the marshes; therefore, it was not in its pure state as we know it. Not being in a pure state it would tend to lose its influence. If and when it did lose its influence it was no longer useful and would be thrown out to be walked on by men. Jesus said, "Ye are the salt of the earth." If we lose our influence what good are we in evangelism? We will do harm and not good to the kingdom. Continuing the same thought Jesus said, "Ye are the light of the world." (cf. Matt. 5:14-16). Since we are lights of the world we are to let our lights shine that others may see our good works and glorify God in heaven. However, if a man hides his light under a basket what good is he doing the kingdom?

Paul emphasized the power of example when he noted, "Ye are our epistle written in our hearts, known and read of all men". (II Cor. 3:2). He speaks of some being a letter written in hearts. This letter is known and read of all men. Believe it or not, all of us are writing a sermon in our daily lives. This sermon is being read by all men. What kind of sermon are we writing? Is it one which will help or hinder in the great mission of the church? We must be careful that we write the right kind of lesson in our lives. Next time we will look at the power of example again.

EVANGELISM—VII

This time we will conclude seven articles on evangelism, the mission of the church. For in the last couple of articles attention has been given to evangelism in deed. Last time we talked about the power of example emphasized by Jesus and Paul.

The power of example was also emphasized by Peter. He said, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands that, if any obey not the word, they also may without the word be won by the conversation (manner of life) of the wives; while they behold your chaste conversation coupled with fear." (I Pet. 3:12).

Example is so powerful that death itself cannot destroy it. In Revelation 14:13 we note, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord from henceforth: yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them." And in Hebrews 11:4 it is made clear that Abel is still speaking even though he has been dead for many years. Just because we die does not mean that our works are destroyed. Think of the influence that Mark, Lenin, Stalin, etc., still have on people in the world today.

In view of the tremendous power of example we must be careful that we are examples for the right group of people. Paul told Timothy, "Be thou an example of the believers (I Tim. 4:12). We cannot be examples for believers one day and unbelievers the next, (cf Matt. 6:24; Jas. 4:4).

Because the early church evangelized in word and deed, they "turned the world upside down". People everywhere were talking about it. They either loved it or hated it. The New Testament lays the obligation upon the church to evangelize in such a way as to constitute a challenge to the world. The world must learn that the gospel message differs from all other messages and that difference really does make a difference.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE--I

Dean M. Kelley, in his book, *Why Conservative Churches Are Growing*, copyrighted 1972, argues that successful religious movements in history have maintained a high profile of unshakable beliefs, exclusiveness, strict discipline, zeal and a distinct code of behaviour. On the other hand, the liberalizing of doctrine and ethical principles by a religious group makes the decline inevitable.

To illustrate, the United Methodist Church has suffered a net loss of 518,000 members in the past four years—the largest loss of any religious group in United States history. Brethren, the same destiny is inevitable for us unless we practice church discipline as did the early church.

We will not be faithful to God unless we honour his law. We must honour his law of *inclusion*, i.e., as to whom should be regarded as a member of God's family. We would not think of granting fellowship to someone who has not been baptized for the remission of sins. (cf. Acts 2:38; Rom. 6:3-5; Acts 22:16). On the other hand, many brethren think that just because a person has been baptized, he should be granted full fellowship of the brethren—makes no difference to them whether the person is a fornicator or walking disorderly. This is false doctrine!!!

Just as we must honor God's law of inclusion we must honor God's law of *exclusion*. The same Bible that tells who is to be granted fellowship tells who is not to be granted fellowship.

In connection with these remarks, two types of error are frequently encountered: (1) a mis-use of church discipline, i.e., an abuse of God's teaching on the matter; for example, one may feel that church discipline is the means by which you "get even" with someone; (2) a non-use of church discipline, i.e., a total abandonment of God's teaching; the attitude of many brethren has well been stated that many would have "peace at any price". "My brethren, these things ought not so to be. (Jas. 3:10).

CHURCH DISCIPLINE—II

Last time the subject of church discipline was introduced. Now, the question, "What is church discipline?", must be asked.

There are many misconceptions regarding church discipline. Some think that church discipline is equated with withdrawal of fellowship. However, this is the last resort. Withdrawal of fellowship enters the picture only after efforts have been made to instruct, exhort, and restore a brother. Others think that church discipline is a means of "getting even" with someone. But, it is not a means by which one gets rid of some personal animosity. The Bible makes it clear that vengeance belongs to the Lord. (Rom. 12:19). Again, some think church discipline is a means of "whipping the brethren in line" regarding some opinionated matter. But, this is far from Biblical truth.

What, then, is church discipline? Positively, it includes all the means by which the Lord's church trains and educates its members to grow in the grace and in the knowledge of the Lord (cf. II Pet. 3:18). The Bible furnishes man with the "instruction" he needs. (II Tim. 3:16). The word "instruction" in II Timothy 3:16 is from *paideia* meaning "the training of a child, *including discipline, and instruction, admonition, rewards, and punishments.*" (Bullinger's Concordance, p. 415). In this sense discipline is directive and preventive. The church seeks to keep its members from partaking of sin by admonition and exhortation toward a righteous life. Many passages substantiate this idea. Hebrews 3:12, 13 teaches that we should "exhort" one another. The Jerusalem church sent Barnabas to Antioch that he might "exhort" them (Acts 11:22, 23), cf. Acts 4:36). The Thessalonians were "exhorted" and "charged" to walk worthy of God. (I Thess. 2:11, 12; cf. 5:11). The preacher is to "exhort" the brethren. (II Tim 4:2). Hebrews 10:24, 25 teaches that one of the purposes of assembling together is to "exhort" one another.

Next time a definition of discipline will be given from the negative standpoint.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE—III

Last time in answer to the question, "What is church discipline?", it was shown that, positively, church discipline includes all the means by which the church trains and educates its members to grow in the grace and knowledge of the Lord.

Negatively, church discipline involves the exclusion of the disorderly from the fellowship of the disciples. In this sense church discipline is corrective. We live in an age of permissiveness in every aspect of life. The home is permissive. Children can practically get away with anything. Government is permissive. Some of the recent happenings in governmental affairs show this clearly. Along with the home and the government, the church has indicated its permissiveness by the *toleration* of that which is *abhorred* by God. Brethren, we need to wake up. God will hold us responsible for the toleration of sin. Note what was said of the church at Thyatira, "Notwithstanding, I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols". (Rev. 2:20). Church discipline is the process whereby the church can be kept pure.

Many passages teach the negative aspect of discipline. Jesus said after attempts were made to regain a brother without any success "... to let him be unto thee as an heathen man and a publican". (Matt. 18:17). Paul said to "... put away from among yourselves that wicked person". (I Cor. 5:13). In I Timothy 1:19, 20 he said that some had made shipwreck of the faith "Of whom is Hymenaeus and Alexander; whom I have delivered unto Satan, that they may learn not to blaspheme." In Thessalonians 3:6 Paul noted, "Now we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye withdraw yourselves from every brother that walketh disorderly . . ."

Next time the purpose of church discipline will be examined.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE—IV

Last time we concluded the discussion of, "What is church discipline?" This time we raise the question, "What is the purpose of church discipline?"

The basic purpose of church discipline is to save souls, i.e., the reclamation of souls, and not the repudiation of them. The mission of Christ was to seek and to save the lost. (LK. 19:10). The church is the body of Christ. (Col. 1:18; Eph. 1:22, 23). Thus, the mission of the church is to seek and to save the lost.

Specifically, the purpose of church discipline is threefold. First, it is the purpose of discipline to save the soul of the erring one. The Bible makes it clear that if one continues to live a life of habitual sin after having obeyed the gospel that he will be lost. (II Pet. 2:20-22). When a brother or sister is in danger of being lost fellow Christians have a duty. (Gal. 6:1). If the person does not repent of sin he must be disfellowshipped *in hopes he will be saved*. (I Cor. 5:5).

Second, it is the purpose of discipline to save the souls of those in the world. Those in the world actually "read" the "sermons" which are "preached" by the lives of dedicated Christians. (Matt. 5:14-16; II Cor. 3:2). The church will gain respect when it exercises discipline. After Ananias and Sapphira had been disciplined, "... great fear came upon all the church, and upon as many as heard these things". (Acts 5:11). Furthermore, "believers were the more added to the Lord, ..." (Acts 5:14). Godly churches will lead men toward Christ while impure, neglectful churches tend to cause men to blaspheme God and lose their own souls. (cf. Rom. 2).

Third, it is the purpose of discipline to save the souls of the members of the church (I Cor. 5:6, 7; Rev. 2:20). God demands that rebellious members be put away. Also, he holds the church responsible for the toleration of ungodly members. (Rev. 2:20). Let us not fail to honor God's law of exclusion along with his law of inclusion.

CHURCH DISCIPLINE—V

This is our last lesson on church discipline. The first question to be considered this time is "Who is subject to church discipline?"

Every member of the church is subject to the *positive* aspect of discipline. Any and all Christians who "walk disorderly" are subject to the negative aspect of discipline. Note specific actions for which one may be disciplined. (I Cor. 5:11; Gal. 5:19-21; Rom. 16:17,18; II Jn. 9-11). Those who "walk disorderly" are to be disciplined. (II Thess. 3:6). This passage is a general principle with regard to corrective discipline. In this case some brethren were refusing to work and therefore were becoming unnecessary burdens. This passage is not limited to just such cases. Verse 6 is a general principle and the remainder of the text, verses 7-15, is the application. To "walk disorderly" is to walk contrary to the truth. (II Thess. 2:15; 3:6).

Another question of great importance is, "What are the steps in church discipline?"

First, the guilt or innocence of the accused is ascertained. No righteous action can be taken until an accurate decision has been made. Second, the righteous must pray for the wrong-doer. We should pray that the person will receive the word in the right attitude. We should pray for ourselves. Third, the faithful must go to the accused in the spirit of meekness. (Gal. 6:1; I Cor. 4:21). Fourth, the conversion of the wrong-doer is sought. (Jas. 5:19,20). Fifth, if the wrong-doer repents, he should be forgiven. Sixth, if he refuses to repent, he must be excluded from the fellowship of the church. (Matt. 18:17; II Thess. 3:6; I Tim. 1:20; I Cor. 5:13). If he later repents, he should be welcomed back. Members must abide by the decisions of the elders to withdraw—not undermine.

Let us honour God's law of inclusion and exclusion.

"NO SMOKING"

I have a sign glued to the pocket of my VW with the words, "NO SMOKING". Many have asked about this sign and my reason for it—I simply do not want to breathe second hand smoke. My reasons are given in the following article from the American Lung Associations Bulletin of June, 1974. The article is entitled "The Facts About Second Hand Cigarette Smoke".

"Researchers have calculated that 68% of the smoke from a burning cigarette goes into the environment. One study shows that, after only 30 minutes in a smoke-filled room, carbon monoxide level in the non-smoker's blood increases as does his blood pressure and heart beat.

"If you sit next to a smoker, the level of carbon-monoxide in your blood will often go up 2 times the level that the government permits industry to have in the air in its factories.

"Smoking 10 cigarettes in an enclosed car also produces carbon monoxide levels in the blood of the non-smoker double that before any smoking had been done. While this doubling occurs during the first hour, it doubles again during the second hour, and even after 3 to 4 hours half of the carbon monoxide is still present in the blood stream.

"Parents who smoke at home can aggravate symptoms in some asthmatic children, and even trigger asthma attacks. Even among non-asthmatic children, researchers found that respiratory illnesses happen twice as often to young children whose parents smoke at home, compared to those with non-smoking parents.

"In a study of 441 non-smokers divided into 2 groups--those with a history of allergies, and those without—70% of *both* groups suffered from eye irritation from smoke. Even among the non-allergic groups, 30% developed headaches and nasal discomfort, 34% developed coughs as a result of the smoke.

"IF YOU CAN'T QUIT SMOKING FOR YOUR OWN HEALTH—HOW ABOUT FOR YOUR CHILD'S SAKE ???"